



**DONALDSON COAL**

Part of the Yancoal Australia Group

ABN: 87 073 088 945

# Annual Review

**Donaldson Coal Mine**

1 November 2023 – 31 October 2024

# DONALDSON COAL

PTY LTD

ABN: 87 073 088 945

## Annual Review

for the

## Donaldson Coal Mine

1 November 2023 – 31 October 2024

---

**Compiled for:**

Donaldson Coal Pty Ltd  
ABN 87 073 088 945  
1132 John Renshaw Drive  
BLACK HILL NSW 2322

Telephone: (02) 4015 1140  
Facsimile: (02) 4934 2736  
Email: donaldson@doncoal.com.au

---

**Compiled by:**

**R.W. Corkery & Co. Pty. Limited**  
Geological & Environmental Consultants  
ABN: 31 002 033 712

Telephone: (02) 9985 8511  
Email: admin@rwcorkery.com  
Postal: PO Box 1796  
CHATSWOOD NSW 2057

---

**Sydney | Orange | Townsville**

**Sydney**  
Suite 12.01, 1-5 Railway Street  
CHATSWOOD NSW 2067


**Orange**  
62 Hill Street  
ORANGE NSW 2800

---

Ref No. 737/30a

January 2025

## Title Block

<b>Name of Operation</b>	Donaldson Coal Mine
<b>Name of Operator</b>	Donaldson Coal Pty Ltd
<b>Development consent / project approval #</b>	DA 98/01173 and 118/698/22
<b>Name of holder of development consent / project approval</b>	Donaldson Coal Pty Ltd
<b>Mining Lease #</b>	ML 1461
<b>Name of holder of mining lease</b>	Donaldson Coal Pty Ltd
<b>Water licence #</b>	20WA218980, 20WA211590 and WAL41522
<b>Name of holder of water licence</b>	Donaldson Coal Pty Ltd
<b>RMP start date</b>	02/07/2022
<b>RMP end date</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Annual Review start date</b>	01/11/2023
<b>Annual Review end date</b>	31/10/2024
<p>I, Phillip Brown, certify that, to the best of my knowledge this report is a true and accurate record of the compliance status of the Donaldson Coal Mine for the period 1 November 2023 to 31 October 2024 and that I am authorised to make this statement of behalf of DONALDSON COAL PTY LTD.</p> <p><i>Note.</i></p> <p>a) <i>The Annual Review is an 'environmental audit' for the purposes of section 122B (2) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. Section 122E provides that a person must not include false or misleading information (or provide information for inclusion in) an audit report produced to the Minister in connection with an environmental audit if the person knows that the information is false or misleading in a material respect. The maximum penalty is, in the case of a corporation, \$1 million and for an individual, \$250,000.</i></p> <p>b) <i>The Crimes Act 1900 contains other offences relating to false and misleading information: Section 192G (Intention to defraud by false or misleading statement – maximum penalty 5 years imprisonment); Section 307A, 307B and 307C (false or misleading application/information/documents – maximum penalty 2 years imprisonment or \$22,000, or both).</i></p>	
<b>Name of authorised reporting officer</b>	Phillip Brown
<b>Title of authorised reporting officer</b>	Environment and Community Relations Superintendent
<b>Signature of authorised reporting officer</b>	
<b>Date</b>	29 January 2025

# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1 OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS .....	2
2.2 SCOPE AND FORMAT .....	2
2.3 KEY PERSONNEL CONTACT DETAILS .....	2
<b>3. APPROVALS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4. OPERATIONS SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>6</b>
4.1 MINING OPERATIONS .....	6
4.2 OTHER OPERATIONS DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD .....	6
4.3 NEXT REPORTING PERIOD .....	6
<b>5. ACTIONS REQUIRED FROM PREVIOUS ANNUAL REVIEW .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>6. ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE.....</b>	<b>9</b>
6.1 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE .....	9
6.2 METEOROLOGICAL MONITORING.....	10
6.3 NOISE .....	13
6.4 BLASTING .....	13
6.5 AIR QUALITY .....	13
6.6 BIODIVERSITY .....	15
6.6.1 Flora.....	15
6.6.2 Fauna.....	18
6.7 HERITAGE.....	21
<b>7. WATER MANAGEMENT .....</b>	<b>23</b>
7.1 WATER BUDGET .....	23
7.2 SURFACE WATER .....	23
7.3 GROUNDWATER .....	28
<b>8. REHABILITATION .....</b>	<b>34</b>
8.1 REHABILITATION PERFORMANCE DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD .....	34
8.2 REHABILITATION MONITORING .....	35
8.3 ACTIONS FOR THE NEXT REPORTING PERIOD .....	38
8.3.1 Rehabilitation .....	38
8.3.2 Monitoring .....	38
<b>9. COMMUNITY .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>10. INDEPENDENT AUDIT .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>11. INCIDENTS AND NON-COMPLIANCES DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD .....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>12. ACTIVITIES TO BE COMPLETED IN THE NEXT REPORTING PERIOD.....</b>	<b>43</b>

# CONTENTS

Page

## APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Site Locality Plan and Monitoring Locations	
Appendix 2: Description and Location of Known Aboriginal Sites	
Appendix 3: Compliance Review	
Appendix 4: 2023 Annual Flora and Fauna Monitoring and 2024 Annual Winter Monitoring	
Appendix 5: Annual Survey of the <i>Tetratheca Juncea</i> Conservation Area 2023	
Appendix 6: 2023 Rehabilitation Monitoring Report	
Appendix 7: Approval to Cease Independent Environmental Audits	

## FIGURES

Figure 2.1 Mine Development Consent Area .....	3
Figure 6.1A Monthly Wind Roses – November 2023 to April 2024 .....	11
Figure 6.1B Monthly Wind Roses – May 2024 to October 2024 .....	12
Figure 6.2 Results of Continuous PM <sub>10</sub> Monitoring .....	14
Figure 7.1 Surface Water Monitoring – 2000 to 2024 .....	26
Figure 7.2 Groundwater Monitoring – 2000 to 2024 .....	30
Figure 8.1 Rehabilitation Status and Activities (1 November 2023 – 31 October 2024) .....	36

## TABLES

Table 1.1 Statement of Compliance.....	1
Table 2.1 Site Personnel.....	2
Table 2.2 Contact Details.....	4
Table 3.1 Donaldson Coal Mine – Approvals, Leases and Licences .....	5
Table 4.1 Production Summary .....	6
Table 6.1 Environmental Performance .....	9
Table 6.2 Monthly Rainfall .....	10
Table 6.3 E-Sampler Results – PM <sub>10</sub> (November 2023 to October 2024).....	14
Table 7.1 Water Stored at Donaldson.....	23
Table 7.2 Summary of Surface Water Quality Monitoring Results – 2023/2024 .....	27
Table 7.3 Summary of Groundwater Monitoring Results – 2023/2024.....	31
Table 8.1 Rehabilitation Summary (Cumulative) .....	35
Table 8.2 Status of Monitoring Against Completion Criteria .....	37
Table 10.1 2015 Independent Audit Recommendations and Status Update .....	40
Table 12.1 Status of Key Actions.....	43

## 1. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The compliance status of relevant approvals was reviewed for the reporting period (see **Appendix 3**) and is summarised in **Table 1.1**. There were no non-compliances during the reporting period.

**Table 1.1**  
**Statement of Compliance**

<b>Were all conditions of the relevant approval(s) complied with?</b>	<b>Yes / No</b>
Development Consent (combined DA 98/01173 and DA 118/698/22)	Yes
Mining Lease 1461	Yes

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

The Donaldson Coal Mine (“the mine”) was an open cut coal mining operation located ~23km from the Port of Newcastle, north of John Renshaw Drive and west of Weakleys Drive (**Figure 2.1**). The mining lease is contained within the Cessnock and Maitland Local Government Areas. A locality plan and aerial photograph showing the location of the mine in a regional context is attached as **Appendix 1** of this report.

The mine commenced operation on 25 January 2001, following approval by the (then) Minister of Urban Affairs and Planning in 1999.

The first load of coal was railed from the mine on 26 March 2001. Up to 31 October 2013, approximately 13Mt of coal had been produced and exported from the site for either domestic (i.e. Hunter Valley power stations) or international use (via the Port of Newcastle).

Mining operations at the mine were completed in April 2013. Progressive rehabilitation activities were undertaken throughout the operation of the mine and a final rehabilitation project commenced in May 2013. This involved removal of roads, excavation of contaminated material, decommissioning of the fuel storage area, buildings and other surface infrastructure, reshaping surfaces to the final landform, topsoil spreading, drainage line construction and seeding with local tree and shrub species. The rehabilitation works at the mine were completed in March 2014 and, to date, remain in care and maintenance with ongoing monitoring.

### 2.2 SCOPE AND FORMAT

This Annual Review for the Donaldson Coal Mine has been compiled by R.W. Corkery & Co. Pty Limited on behalf of Donaldson Coal Pty Ltd (“Donaldson”). Donaldson Coal Pty Ltd is a fully owned subsidiary of Yancoal Australia Limited.

This is the ninth Annual Review submitted for the mine, following 13 Annual Environmental Management Reports, and is applicable for the period 1 November 2023 to 31 October 2024 (“the reporting period”).

This Annual Review generally follows the format and content requirements identified in the NSW Government’s *Annual Review Guideline* dated October 2015.

### 2.3 KEY PERSONNEL CONTACT DETAILS

Donaldson owns the mining operation and is the holder of Mining Lease (ML) 1461. Donaldson is also the mining operator. **Table 2.1** outlines the site personnel responsible for the various aspects of the operation during the reporting period.

**Table 2.1**  
**Site Personnel**

Position	Site Personnel
Operations Manager, Donaldson Coal Mine	Mr William Farnworth
Environment and Community Relations Superintendent, Donaldson Coal Mine	Mr Phillip Brown

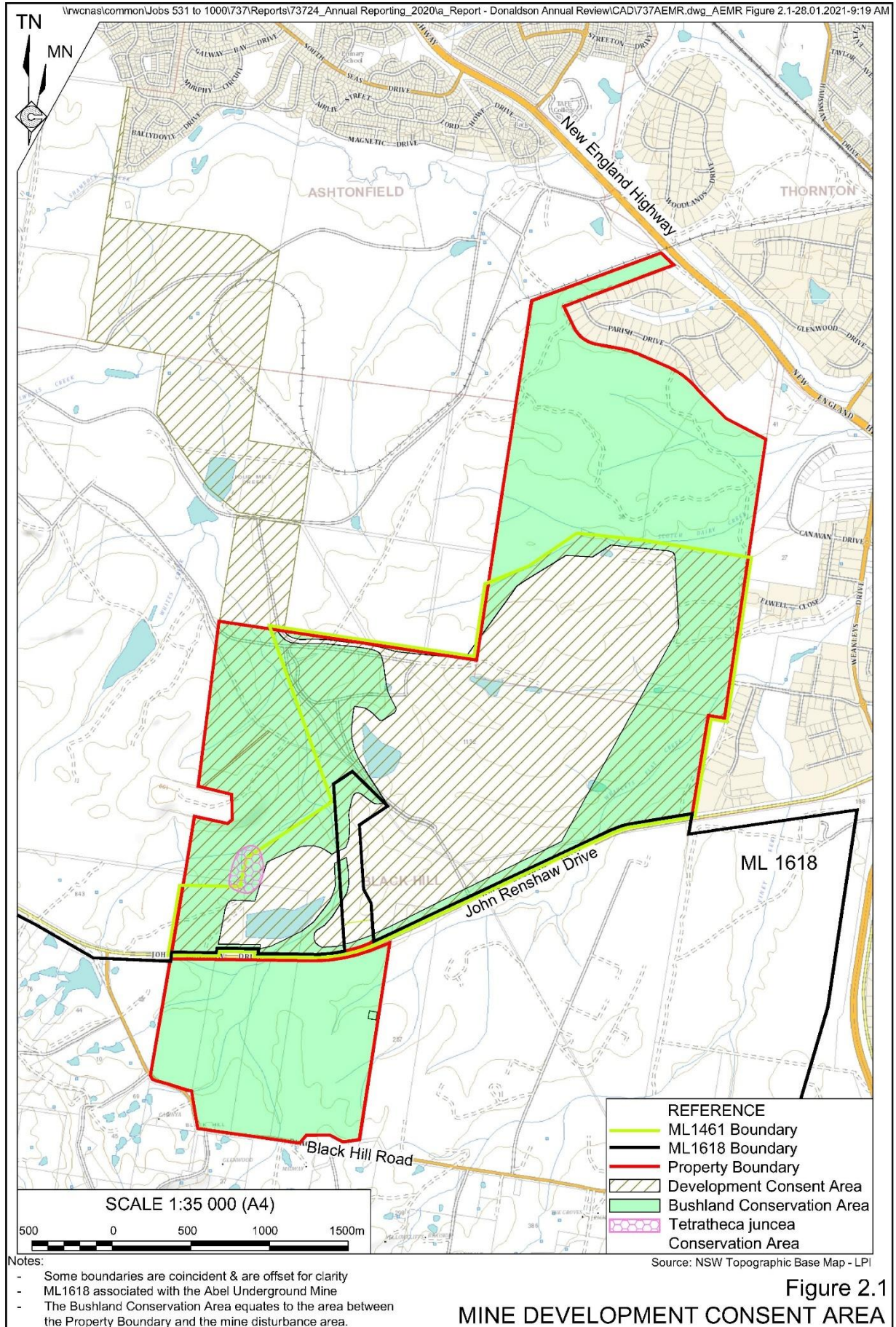


Figure 2.1  
MINE DEVELOPMENT CONSENT AREA



**Table 2.2** outlines the contacts for the Donaldson Coal Operations Manager, Mr William Farnworth, and the Environment and Community Relations Superintendent, Mr Phillip Brown.

**Table 2.2**  
**Contact Details**

<b>Physical Address:</b>	Donaldson Coal Mine 1132 John Renshaw Drive BLACK HILL NSW 2322
<b>Postal Address:</b>	PO Box 1613 Newcastle, NSW, 2300
<b>Community Hotline (24hrs):</b>	1800 111 271
<b>Phone:</b>	(02) 4993 7356 (William Farnworth) (02) 6570 9219 (Phillip Brown)
<b>Fax:</b>	(02) 4015 1159
<b>e-mail:</b>	donaldson@doncoal.com.au
<b>Website:</b>	www.yancoal.com.au/

A 24-hour Environmental Hotline (Tel: 1800 111 271) is maintained by Donaldson. Details of calls are recorded by the Environment & Community Relations Superintendent for further actioning, if required.

### 3. APPROVALS

**Table 3.1** provides a current list of statutory instruments in effect, including the date of grant of all leases, subleases, consents, approvals and licenses. It also includes information relating to the current Rehabilitation Management Plan (RMP).

**Table 3.1**  
**Donaldson Coal Mine – Approvals, Leases and Licences**

Approval/Lease/Licence	Issue / Approval Date	Expiry Date	Details / Comments
Mining Lease (No. 1461)	21/12/1999	20/12/2040	Granted by the (then) Minister for Mineral Resources. Incorporates a surface area of 515.6ha (following excision of the Abel Surface Infrastructure Area from the lease in 2008). Standard conditions were implemented for the mining lease on 17 October 2022 in accordance with the <i>Mining Regulation 2016</i> amendments. A renewal application for ML 1461 which was lodged 27 November 2019 was subsequently approved 12 May 2023.
Rehabilitation Management Plan	01/08/2022	Not Applicable	In accordance with the Operational Rehabilitation Reform a Rehabilitation Management Plan was prepared and finalised on 1 August 2022. The Rehabilitation Objectives and Final Landform and Rehabilitation Plan were approved by the Resources Regulator on 25 August 2023.
Development Consent (combined DA 98/01173 and 118/698/22)	14/10/1999	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modified on 26 September 2005 and 24 June 2011.</li> <li>Consent for mining operations lapsed on 31 December 2013.</li> <li>Certain conditions of the consent will continue to operate after the consent for mining operations has lapsed.</li> </ul>
Environment Protection Licence (No. 12856)	09/07/2008	Not Applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anniversary date 09 July.</li> <li>Current licence version dated 4 September 2024.</li> <li>Combined licence for the Donaldson Coal Mine and Abel Underground Coal Mine.</li> </ul>
Water Supply Works Approval 20WA218980	01/07/2016	30/06/2029	Bore Licence 20BL168123 was issued to cover groundwater extraction as a result of the active mining area. Following commencement of the <i>Water Sharing Plan for the North Coast Fractured and Porous Rock Groundwater Sources 2016</i> in July 2016 20BL168123 was converted to a water supply works approval and water access licence with an allocation of 300ML/year.
Water Access Licence (WAL) 41522	01/07/2016	Continuing	
Water Supply Works Approval 20WA211590	01/08/09	31/07/32	Issued for the works associated with the open cut mining pits as located within the <i>Water Sharing Plan for the Hunter Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2009</i> .

## 4. OPERATIONS SUMMARY

### 4.1 MINING OPERATIONS

Coal mining activities ceased in April 2013 and all mining equipment was removed from site. No coal mining was undertaken during the reporting period or is planned during the next reporting period (see **Table 4.1**).

**Table 4.1**  
**Production Summary**

Material	Approved limit (specify source)	Previous reporting period (actual)	This reporting period (actual)	Next reporting period (forecast)
Waste Rock / Overburden	No longer applicable	0	0	0
ROM Coal / Ore		0	0	0
Coarse Reject		0	0	0
Fine Reject (Tailings)		0	0	0
Saleable Product		0	0	0

### 4.2 OTHER OPERATIONS DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD

During the reporting period no exploration, land preparation or construction activities were undertaken. Additionally, no coal processing or transportation activities were undertaken within ML 1461 during the reporting period.

Environmental monitoring activities continued throughout the reporting period including surface water, groundwater, flora and fauna and rehabilitation monitoring. Results of this monitoring are summarised in Sections 6 and 7.

Rehabilitation activities were completed in March 2014 with no further rehabilitation work occurring during the reporting period.

The revised Rehabilitation Objectives Statement and Final Landform and Rehabilitation Plan submitted during the previous reporting period were approved on 25 August 2023. Following this a review and update of the Rehabilitation Management Plan was undertaken to include the approved documents, as required by Clause 11(a), Division 3, Part 2 of Schedule 8a of the *Mining Regulation 2016*. The revision of the Rehabilitation Documents for the mine was undertaken to account for the Snowy Hydro Gas Pipeline easement which transects ML 1461.

### 4.3 NEXT REPORTING PERIOD

The activities proposed for 2024/2025 will principally involve continued monitoring and, if required, maintenance activities in accordance with the approved management plans and RMP. The following provides a summary of the planned activities.

## Exploration

Donaldson currently does not intend to undertake any drilling within ML 1461 during the 2024/2025 reporting period.

## Mining

No further mining will be undertaken.

## Rehabilitation

All rehabilitation works have previously been completed. Any rehabilitation works during the 2024/2025 reporting period will relate to ongoing maintenance, principally erosion and sediment control, weed management and vegetation establishment, as required. Planning activities will also be undertaken including preparation of an implementation program for the recommendations arising from the *Sediment Dam Investigation* report and commencement of a rehabilitation materials balance report as discussed in the RMP.

## Monitoring

The following monitoring will be undertaken during the next reporting period.

- Surface water – ongoing surface water quality monitoring in accordance with the site Water Management Plan. Monitoring will be undertaken by CBased Environmental.
- Groundwater – ongoing groundwater level and quality monitoring will be undertaken by CBased Environmental.
- Flora and Fauna – Wedgetail Project Consulting (Wedgetail) will continue to undertake annual flora and fauna surveys and reporting.
- Rehabilitation – Wedgetail will continue to undertake rehabilitation monitoring and reporting.

## Community Consultation and Liaison

The 24-hour environmental hotline will be maintained and a register retained of any complaints received.

## 5. ACTIONS REQUIRED FROM PREVIOUS ANNUAL REVIEW

The 2022/2023 Annual Review was submitted to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure compliance unit and the Resources Regulator on 29 January 2024. Feedback from the DPHI compliance unit was received on 18 April 2024 confirming the Annual Review was considered to generally satisfy the requirements of the Development Consent and the Department's *Annual Review Guideline* (October 2015). No specific actions were raised regarding the 2022/2023 Annual Review, however, DPHI requested the following actions for all subsequent Annual Reviews.

1. Section 5 — Actions required from previous Annual Review— please review Section 12 of the previous Annual Review and ensure that a status update of actions is reported in this section of the Annual Review.
2. Section 12 — Activities to be completed in the next reporting period — please review the previous Annual Review and ensure that a status update of actions is reported. It is noted that Annual Reviews for periods 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23 have actions that are not ongoing, and yet, an update has not been provided and the action remains incomplete.

Section 12 of this Annual Review has been revised to include a summary and status of all activities proposed for each of the Annual Reviews identified above.

No feedback was received from the Resources Regulator in relation to the Annual Review.

## 6. ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

### 6.1 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

A summary of environmental performance for the principal environmental aspects is provided in **Table 6.1**. Further detail regarding specific environmental aspects is also provided in the following subsections.

**Table 6.1**  
**Environmental Performance**

Aspect	Approval criteria / EIS prediction	Performance during the reporting period	Trend/key management implications	Implemented/ proposed management actions
Noise and Vibration	DA Condition 15 – approved noise limits range from 35dB(A) to 50dB(A).	No mining or earthmoving activities occurred and rehabilitation has been completed.	No community noise complaints were received for the mine during the reporting period.  Implies management measures are currently adequate.	No noise monitoring undertaken.  No additional management action required.
Blasting	DA Condition 24 – Overpressure 115dB(A) and max 120dB(A)  Vibration 5mm/s and max 10mm/s	No blasts undertaken.	No specific management implications given no blasts undertaken.	No specific management actions required.
Air Quality	DA Condition 37 – Annual Average TSP 90ug/m <sup>3</sup> and deposited dust 4g/m <sup>2</sup> /month.	No mining or earthmoving activities occurred and rehabilitation has been completed.  No exceedances recorded.	No community air quality complaints were received for the mine during the reporting period.  Implies management measures are currently adequate.	No additional management action required.
Biodiversity	DA Condition 70 – Provision of compensatory habitat.	There have been no significant negative impacts on biodiversity within the Donaldson Bushland Conservation Area over the last 20 years.  Whilst a slight recovery was recorded in 2020 following drought breaking rain, <i>Tetratheca juncea</i> numbers continued to show an overall decline since commencement of monitoring.	Trend has been an increase in biomass which has now plateaued. Overall fauna diversity consistent, however, decrease in birds with an interior habitat speciality since 2012 (possibly due to large-scale clearing associated with adjacent industrial estate in 2012). Continued maturation of mine rehabilitation areas may reverse this trend.  Continued increase in ground species density appears to be the probable cause for the decline in the <i>Tetratheca juncea</i> population. A hazard reduction burn within the Tetratheca Juncea Conservation Area (TJCA) is recommended by ecologist.  Renewal of clump flagging (for identification) is also recommended.	Continued monitoring of flora and fauna trends and further hazard reduction particularly within the TJCA.
Heritage	DA Condition 81-86 – Aboriginal Heritage Conservation Area and Management Plan	No heritage items identified or disturbed during the reporting period. No complaints or other management issues.	No heritage complaints were received and no heritage-related issues were identified during the reporting period.  Implies no specific management actions were necessary.	No additional management action required.

## 6.2 METEOROLOGICAL MONITORING

An on-site automated weather station continued to be operated during the reporting period, recording rain, wind speed and direction. **Figure 6.1** presents the monthly wind roses for the reporting period whilst **Table 6.2** provides the monthly rainfall data.

**Table 6.2**  
**Monthly Rainfall**

Average Monthly Rainfall (mm)													
Period	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2000	61.0	32.0	279.0	146.0	45.0	24.0	27.0	31.0	33.0	47.0	106.0	32.0	863.0
2001	46.0	169.0	193.0	114.0	244.0	3.4	63.0	22.0	12.0	31.0	91.0	38.0	1026.4
2002	48.0	281.0	184.0	66.4	62.1	30.0	30.0	21.0	17.4	18.8	56.2	149.2	964.1
2003	6.0	90.0	22.2	77.0	135.0	13.2	43.0	27.4	0.0	63.2	137.6	39.0	653.6
2004	86.0	176.6	80.0	33.6	17.4	9.4	15.4	43.1	61.2	136.0	77.4	69.8	805.9
2005	64.4	95.8	127.8	57.4	61.8*	56.8	7.2	0.8	37.0	84.0	22.8	9.6	625.4
2006	29.8	47.4	63.6	4.6	7.8	43.8	42.6	49.2	162.4	25.4	37.8	35.6	550.0
2007	13.4	88.0	102.0	86.0	60.0	301.0	17.0	79.6	19.8	17.2	163.8	49.5	997.3
2008	153.4	154.3	46.0	237.6	2.2	122.9	30.0	28.5	195.3	62.2	73.3	62.6	1168.3
2009	11.3	97.7	136.5	157.2	125.7	75.7	32.1	1.8	29.2	59.8	51.4	62.0	840.4
2010	0.0	52.1	83.9	37.1	89.4	112.8	65.3	38.5	26.4	80.6	171.1	39.9*	797.1
2011	26.0	34.5	65.6	137.9	98.8	152.0	129.0	49.0	103.0	100.0	171.9	75.9	1143.6
2012	96.1	207.0	137.6	114.7	11.8	172.3	53.8	26.6	18.7	5.7	21.8	1.2	867.3
2013	1.0	100.0	64.2	65.8	59.8	63.8	71.8	9.6	21.8	27.0	261.8	2.6	1094.0
2014	15.6	108.3	112.8	99.3	44.3	31.4	24.6	104.0	42.4	55.0	38.4	133.4	809.5
2015	167.0	48.0	73.3	412.0	89.4	44.6	17.9	30.6	56.8	59.0	69.8	103.8	1172.2
2016	430.8	26.0	78.0	31.8	13.4	113.0	44.2	74.2	60.0	43.8	44.5	41.8	1001.5
2017	66.9	71.7	150.4	94.5	12.7	128.5	3.2	6.0	12.6	77.7	66.8	41.6	624.2
2018	6.6	120.0	191.4	52.8	7.0	107.4	4.2	21.4	55.4	109.0	92.2	65.0	832.4
2019	17.2	32.8	158.0	27.0	19.4	97.4	26.0	66.6	69.4	22.0	28.2	0.0	564.0
2020	55.2	214.8	106.3	52	45.4	80.2	166.6	41	35.6	146.6	53.0	118.4	1115.1
2021	89.4	101.8	234.8	48.6	31.4	72.0	20.6	20.6	31.0	67.4	198.6	55.4	971.6
2022	78.8	102.2	271.4	107.4	86.2	12.6	304.8	43	111.2	97.2	47.0	18.4	1280.2
2023	71.0	98.0	111.0	76.0	21.6	8.2	18.2	35.4	15.0	49.4	<b>84.0</b>	<b>76.6</b>	664.4
2024	<b>30.8</b>	<b>83.2</b>	<b>27.0</b>	<b>219.0</b>	<b>142.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>58.8</b>	<b>44.4</b>	<b>67.6</b>	<b>48.4</b>	-	-	-
Minimum	0.0	26.0	22.2	4.6	2.2	3.4	3.2	0.8	0.0	5.7	21.8	0.0	550.0
Average	66.9	105.3	124.0	102.3	61.4	79.1	52.7	36.6	51.8	61.3	90.3	55.7	893.0
Maximum	430.8	281.0	279.0	412.0	244.0	301.0	304.8	104.0	195.3	146.6	261.8	149.2	1280.2

Note: Results relevant to this reporting period are in **bold**.

During the reporting period, winds dominated from the south-eastern quadrant during summer and early autumn (between November 2023 and March 2024) and from the north-western quadrant during autumn, winter and early spring (between May 2024 and September 2024). Winds dominated from both the south-eastern and north-western quadrants during periods of transition between cooler and warmer periods (i.e. April 2024 and October 2024).

Total rainfall during the reporting period was 982.4mm, which is 89.4mm more than the average rainfall recorded to date. April and May 2024 recorded rainfall levels significantly higher than the long-term average, however remained lower than the maximum rainfall recorded for those months. April's rainfall was the highest recorded since 2015 and May's was the highest recorded since 2001. Rainfall recorded for the remaining months was generally consistent with or below the long-term average since commencement of monitoring in 2000.

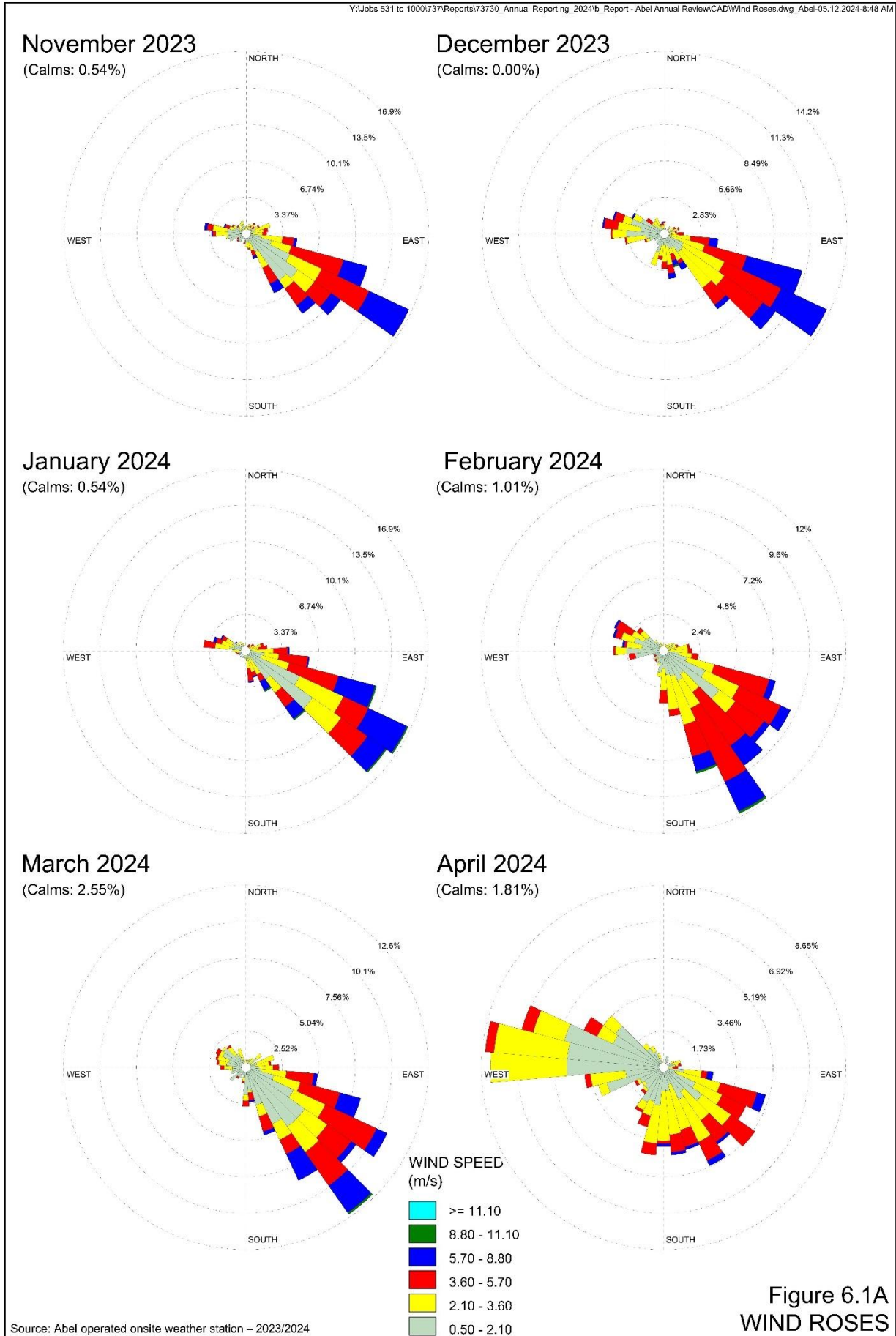


Figure 6.1A  
WIND ROSES



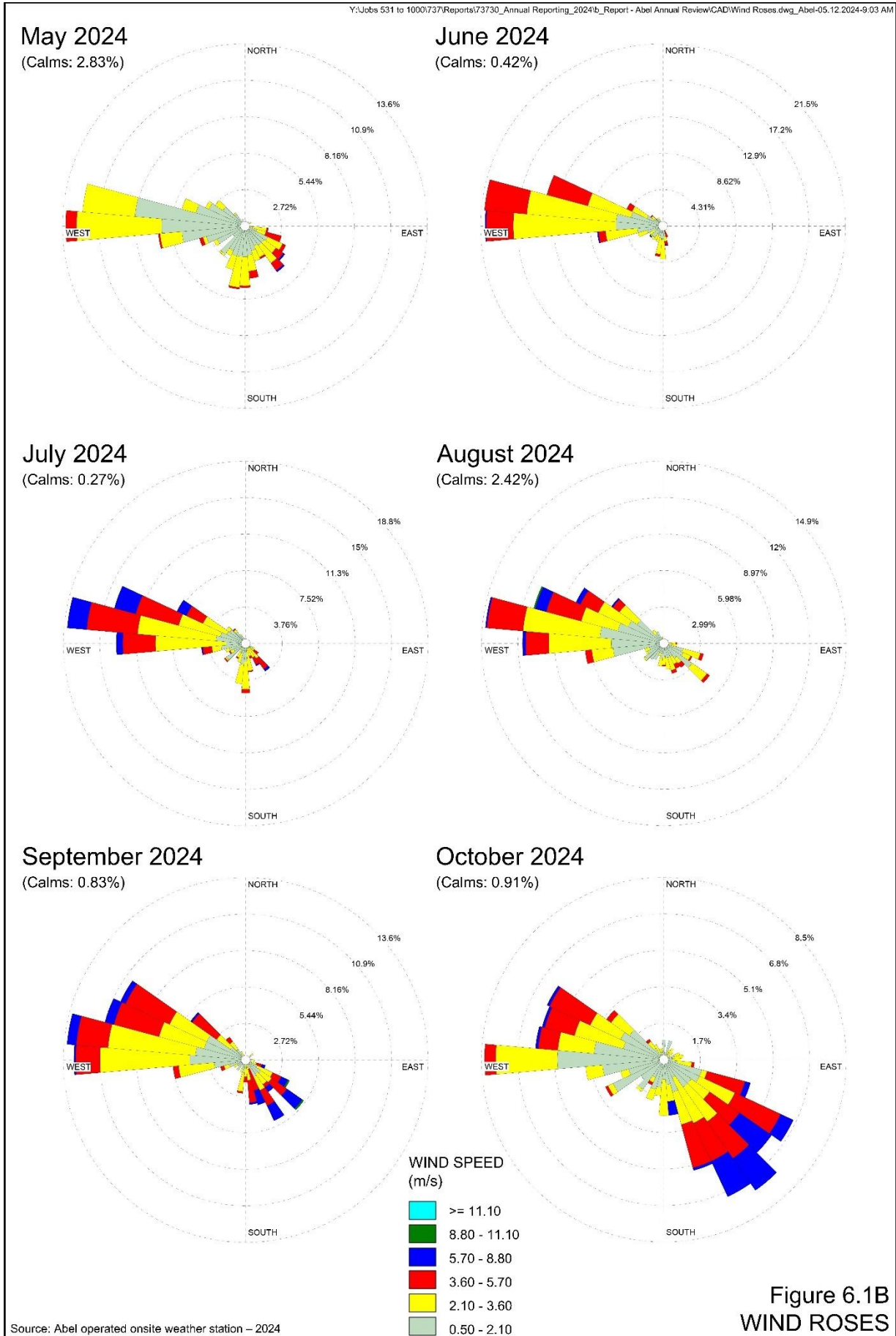


Figure 6.1B  
WIND ROSES

### 6.3 NOISE

As mining ceased in April 2013, no noise monitoring was undertaken for the Donaldson Open Cut Coal Mine during the reporting period. Based on the absence of activities and community complaints, no specific noise management measures were required and no further improvements are currently considered necessary. No further monitoring is currently proposed.

### 6.4 BLASTING

No blasting was undertaken during the reporting period.

### 6.5 AIR QUALITY

#### Environmental Management

The Donaldson Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Management Plan (Donaldson Coal Pty Ltd, 2019) reflects the reduced air quality monitoring requirements during the care and maintenance period of the mine in accordance with recommendations made in the 2019 Independent Environmental Audit for the Abel Underground Mine<sup>1</sup>.

It is noted that, as part of the consolidation of EPL 11080 with EPL 12856, the requirement to monitor deposited dust and total suspended particulates (TSP) was removed. The date of consolidation (and corresponding reduction in monitoring requirements) occurred on 1 October 2021. The following dust monitoring equipment has been decommissioned.

- Nine Depositional Dust Gauges measuring insoluble solids.
- Two HVAS measuring PM<sub>10</sub>.
- One High Volume Air Sampler (HVAS) measuring TSP.

In accordance with EPL 12856, air quality monitoring data will now only be collected and reported for the continuous E-Sampler monitor measuring PM<sub>10</sub> located at Black Hill. The locations of dust monitoring equipment, including both active equipment and equipment that has now been decommissioned, are outlined in **Appendix 1**.

As there were no operational activities during the reporting period and the majority of the site has been rehabilitated, no specific air quality management measures were required throughout the reporting period.

#### Environmental Performance

Donaldson operated one continuous E-Sampler monitor measuring PM<sub>10</sub> during the reporting period with the results of monitoring presented as follows. It is noted that measurements taken include all background air pollution as well as any contribution occurring from the mine.

---

<sup>1</sup> Note: The Air Quality Management Plan is a joint management plan covering both the mine and the Abel Underground Coal Mine.

Previous data for the Depositional Dust Gauges measuring insoluble solids, High Volume Air Sampler (HVAS) measuring PM<sub>10</sub>, and HVAS measuring TSP is available in the previous Annual Reporting for the Mine.

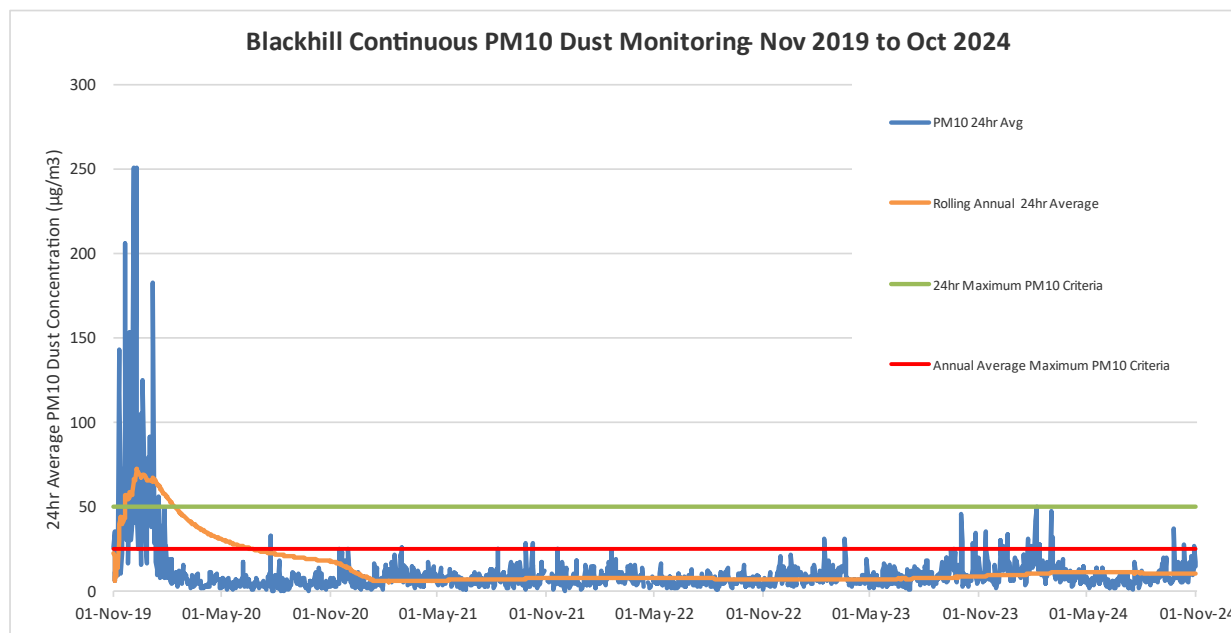
Continuous Monitor

Donaldson operated one continuous E-Sampler air quality monitor at Black Hill Public School during the reporting period. **Table 6.3** and **Figure 6.2** summarise the continuous monitoring data since installation of the current E-Sampler unit. The measurement of PM<sub>10</sub> by optical methods (such as by DustTrak and E-Sampler monitors) is known to be particularly sensitive to rainfall or high humidity events. Monthly inspections of the E-Sampler monitor and regular servicing of the instrument assist with reducing occasions when the measurements become unstable or drift from sensible values.

**Table 6.3**  
**E-Sampler Results – PM<sub>10</sub> (November 2023 to October 2024)**

Site	Data Collection	Days Sampled	Highest 24-hour average PM <sub>10</sub> (µg/m <sup>3</sup> )	Annual average PM <sub>10</sub> (µg/m <sup>3</sup> )	Lowest 24-hour average PM <sub>10</sub> (µg/m <sup>3</sup> )
Black Hill Public School	Continuous	365	49.8	10.9	1.1

Note: Data in this table is for the annual reporting period 1 November 2023 to 31 October 2024.



**Figure 6.2 Results of Continuous PM<sub>10</sub> Monitoring**

Samples were successfully collected on 365 days of the sampling period of which there were 3 days in which there was partial data capture. In total approximately 8,756hrs of data was captured out of 8,760hrs of possible data capture, equating to a 99.97% capture rate, in line with EPA’s minimum capture requirements for continuous monitoring. Data loss during the period principally resulted from power outages, removal of invalid data due do calibration, and some unavoidable data loss during daylight savings change over. Notwithstanding this, the level of data capture is high and suitably characterises the air quality during the reporting period.

The average annual PM<sub>10</sub> result was 10.9µg/m<sup>3</sup> from the continuous monitoring. Maximum measured PM<sub>10</sub> at the continuous monitor was 49.8µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

The rolling annual 24-hour average did not exceed the annual average criteria of 25µg/m<sup>3</sup> during the reporting period.

### Greenhouse Gases

As the Donaldson Coal Mine has ceased operations, the principal activities undertaken include monitoring and inspections. Beyond maintenance of vehicles, no specific management measures were implemented during the reporting period.

It is noted that the Environmental Impact Statement for the mine was prepared in 1998 prior to current greenhouse gas assessment and reporting requirements.

### **Reportable Incidents**

No reportable air quality incidents were recorded during the 2023/2024 Annual Review reporting period.

### **Further Improvements**

No improvements relating to air pollution are planned or considered necessary.

## **6.6 BIODIVERSITY**

During the reporting period, biodiversity values have principally been managed through the ongoing implementation of the flora and fauna monitoring program. These management measures are outlined in detail within the 'Flora and Fauna Management Plan' (dated June 2019) prepared for the mine. Full copies of the monitoring reports are provided as **Appendices 4 and 5**.

Management of biodiversity over the life of the mine has also been achieved through the implementation of the Bushland Conservation Area (BCA) in accordance with Conditions 70 to 74A of DA98/01173 and 118/698/22.

In accordance with the approved *Bushland Conservation Area Management Plan* and Condition 72, the BCA will continue to be actively managed until 2036.

### **6.6.1 Flora**

#### **Environmental Management**

Flora monitoring has been conducted through several flora surveys throughout the reporting period. Surveys have been conducted in the Bushland Conservation Area (BCA), rehabilitation areas, and on *Tetratheca juncea*. Management and monitoring of flora within rehabilitation areas is discussed in Section 8.2.

### Bushland Conservation Area

Annual flora quadrat monitoring has been conducted in the BCA since 2001. In 2023, nine 20m x 20m quadrats were monitored for species richness, density, floristic composition and biomass parameters. Quadrat monitoring occurs in late spring to early summer each year and aims to monitor the influence of mining activities on flora around the mine site.

Weed control measures continued to be undertaken during the reporting period, including targeted *Cortaderia sp.* (Pampas grass) treatment and opportunistic treatment of *Lantana camara* (West Indian Lantana). The primary means of controlling weeds was through herbicide use and manual removal. Wedgetail (2024a) noted during the 2023 annual survey that weed control has been effective in controlling *L. camara* and allowing the subsequent recruitment of native species (particularly in Quadrats 5 and 7). Additional control of *L. camara* in areas surrounding Quadrats 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7 will be further considered to ensure long-term control is effective. High levels of *Tradescantia fluminensis* were recorded in Quadrat 6 and *Ochna serrulate* (Mickey mouse plant) in Quadrat 7 were identified. Control of both *T. fluminensis* and *O. serrulate* is recommended by Wedgetail.

### Tetradlea Juncea

There was one species of threatened flora identified during the preparation of the 1998 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), namely *Tetradlea juncea* (Black-eyed Susan). As a result, a *Tetradlea Juncea* Management Plan was developed (Gunninah, 2000a) and a survey and identification report (Gunninah, 2000b) was completed, which located the boundaries of the population and defined the limit of the conservation precinct. Subsequent works during 2001 and 2002 extended the boundary and up to an additional two hundred (200) plants were found during routine monitoring and vegetation characterisation.

In addition, approximately four hundred (400) plants were discovered during routine pre-clearing surveys and monitoring episodes. A large proportion of these plants fell outside of the active mine area, adding further conservation significance to the area(s) identified and managed by Donaldson as the *Tetradlea Juncea* Conservation Area (TJCA) (see **Figure 2.1**).

In addition to the creation of the TJCA, the following additional control measures have previously been employed.

- The protection of 650ha of bushland around the mine to conserve habitat.
- Ongoing mapping and management protocols.
- Pre-clearing surveys by a qualified biologist prior to any clearing activities.

In 2005, a design was also developed for the experimental translocation of *Tetradlea Juncea* from the planned mine disturbance area. The experimental design for the translocation was based on a study being conducted in the Gwandalan area (Ecobiological, 2005). The ongoing monitoring of the translocated plants focused upon collecting data and information about the circumstances under which the plants are growing. Each plant and each recipient site was photographed following translocation and every twelve months for 5 years. The plants were monitored and watered on a weekly basis for 6 weeks post planting to help ensure maximum initial survival and inspected twice per year for the 5 year period.

## Environmental Performance

### Bushland Conservation Area

The following summary of environmental performance has been extracted and compiled from Wedgetail (2024a and 2024b). A full copy of these reports, including survey methodology, data and statistical analysis, is presented in **Appendix 4**.

The 2023 flora survey results show an overall increase in plant species richness and structural components since the baseline survey in 2001. An overall increase in plant species richness and cover of groundcover species compared to 2019 continued to be observed, likely indicative of the early stages of recovery from drought conditions experienced during 2018 and 2019. To date, a total of 308 flora species have been recorded across all survey events with 162 flora species identified during the 2023 survey. This represents an increase of two species compared to 2022, and an increase of 28 species since the 2001 baseline survey. Since commencement of monitoring the cumulative number of species steadily increased until 2009 and has since levelled and stabilised. This is consistent with expected ecological processes, weather patterns, and other variables.

Despite minor year-to-year fluctuations, all biomass variables examined (i.e. basal area, height, foliage projective cover (FPC), and stand volume) have shown substantial increases since the baseline survey in 2001. All quadrats continued to record an increase in FPC compared to the 2001 baseline survey. FPC increased from 2001 with peak levels recorded in 2012/2013 followed by a general decline between 2015 and 2017. Survey results for 2023 recorded mixed results with five quadrats recording a small increase (Q1, Q2, Q6, Q8 and Q9) and four a small decrease (Q3, Q4, Q5 and Q7). The 2023 survey also recorded an increase in both basal area and stand volume at all quadrats with both parameters generally increasing since the 2001 baseline survey. Wedgetail (2024a) conclude that the protection of the Bushland Conservation Area from a history of logging, clearing, frequent fire, firewood collection and rubbish dumping has likely contributed to the significant increase in biomass at all monitored sites since 2001.

Overall, the recorded trends are indicative of a dynamic plant community with high recruitment from the seed pool, an indicator of a healthy native plant community, and Wedgetail (2024a) conclude that the Donaldson Coal operations are causing minimal impacts on biodiversity within the Donaldson Bushland Conservation Area.

### Tetratheca Juncea

A baseline report was completed in January 2003 by Barker Harle. This report describes the implementation of the *Tetratheca Juncea* Management Plan and includes baseline information for use in subsequent reports. Subsequent monitoring and reporting is undertaken on an annual basis.

The 2023 annual monitoring was completed by Wedgetail (2024c) (see **Appendix 5**). Wedgetail reported that the monitoring data has shown a declining population between 2005 and 2014, with a small recovery, followed by a continued decline. The probable cause for the continuing reduction was a measured increase in the density of ground species outcompeting *Tetratheca juncea*. The monitoring indicates that the *Tetratheca juncea* population would benefit from a fire which would both reduce the current level of competition and provide more nesting areas for tunnelling native bee pollinators.

Notwithstanding the overall decline, Wedgetail note that there is a core of clumps that have survived over all or for the majority of the 19 years of monitoring, potentially representing a

permanent population. In addition, drought breaking rainfall in 2020 may have resulted in the recovery of 14 clumps since the 2019 survey, however, even after exceptional rainfall, the 2021 survey showed a declining population with low flowering. The 2022 results show flowering has increased, again likely due to increased rainfall associated with a persistent La Nina. The 2023 results are generally consistent with the previous survey results with flowering and fruiting patterns following seasonal rainfall trends. The population is showing signs of long-term resilience, with Wedgetail noting the occurrence of healthy fruiting activity on younger individuals / clumps.

The monitoring also indicates that clump flagging had deteriorated to the point where it is difficult to identify clumps. Wedgetail recommend that a certified surveyor is engaged to locate the original clump coordinates and clump flagging be renewed for further monitoring to continue.

### Reportable Incidents

During the 2023/2024 Annual Review period no reportable incidents occurred.

### Further Improvements

Excluding ongoing weed monitoring and control, including targeting of *L. camara*, *T. fluminensis*, and *O. serrulata*, there are no proposed improvements to the management of flora in the BCA or TJCA in the next reporting period.

In response to previous recommendations from Kleinfelder, applications were submitted to the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) for 'hazard reduction burns' in several areas including the TJCA in order to improve the *Tetratheca juncea* habitat. Hazard reduction burns were undertaken in the northern part of the BCA, but not within the TJCA, by the RFS in October 2020 and September 2021. Wedgetail (2024c) continue to recommend burning of the TJCA at an appropriate time. Renewal of flagging for clumps of *Tetratheca juncea* will also be reviewed during the next reporting period as recommended by Wedgetail.

## 6.6.2 Fauna

### Environmental Management

Several species of threatened fauna were identified during the 1998 EIS and supplementary reports, including both the areas proposed for mining and the immediate environs. They include the following.

- Powerful Owl
- Masked Owl
- Barking Owl
- Sooty Owl
- Varied Sittella
- Yellow-bellied Sheathtail Bat
- Eastern Bent-wing Bat
- Eastern Freetail Bat
- Eastern Cave Bat
- Greater Broad-nose Bat
- Little Bent-winged Bat
- Southern Myotis
- Little Lorikeet
- Squirrel Glide
- Eastern False Pipistrelle

To ensure a high level of conservation for the threatened fauna species found on the site, the following measures have been taken.

- The protection of 650ha of bushland around the mine to conserve habitat.
- Ongoing survey and management protocols.
- Routine annual quadrant monitoring.
- Wild dog and fox baiting programs, including a program undertaken by Enright Land Management between October and November in 2023 and 2024 (with required public notification undertaken).
- Placement of nest boxes in the Bushland Conversation Area to replace nesting sites destroyed by clearing.
- Ongoing and progressive rehabilitation of disturbed areas.

The following fauna monitoring activities were undertaken during the 2023/2024 reporting period.

- Terrestrial and arboreal mammal trapping
- Microbat trapping
- Microbat call detection
- Owl call playback
- Spotlighting
- Bird surveys
- Nest box monitoring

These monitoring activities were carried out during summer and winter surveys, as well as during recolonisation surveys of rehabilitated areas at the mine. Wedgetail (2024b) reported that a total of 41 out of the 45 nest boxes were available / suitable for fauna use during the reporting period, consistent with the previous winter period. Three nest boxes were reported as damaged, and one nest box was in use while showing signs of damage that would need repairing / replacement.

## Environmental Performance

The following summary of environmental performance has been extracted and compiled from Wedgetail (2024a). A full copy of these reports, including survey methodology, data and statistical analysis, are presented in **Appendix 4**.

A total of 180 fauna species have been recorded since monitoring began in 2001. The spring/summer 2023 survey detected a total of 75 fauna species consisting of 43 bird, 15 bat, five terrestrial mammal, four arboreal mammals, five amphibian, and three reptile species (Wedgetail 2024a). Of these species six bat and one bird species are listed as Vulnerable under the NSW *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*. The 2023 fauna survey results demonstrate a significant decrease in species richness compared to the previous 3 years. The 2024 survey detected a total of 66 fauna species consisting of 42 bird, 19 mammal, and five amphibian species (Wedgetail 2024b). Of these species five bat and one bird species are listed as Vulnerable under the NSW



*Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016.* The total number of fauna species recorded (66) in winter 2024 has increased from the 57 species recorded in winter 2023, remaining above the long-term yearly average of 56.

Similarity analysis of faunal assemblages for all years indicates a similarity of 68% with two clusters of years (2007, 2010-2012) showing 80% similarity. Further analysis of assemblage similarity for various faunal groups revealed the following.

- Arboreal Mammals
  - The four arboreal mammals recorded in the 2023 survey is approximately equal to the yearly average of 4.35 species.
  - Species assemblages for all years show a minimum similarity of 65% with four years (2003, 2008, 2016, and 2020) and three groupings (2013/2015, 2010/2017-2019, and 2006/2007/2009/2012/2014) showing 100% similarity.
  - Variation can likely be attributed to sporadic detections of less common or highly mobile species such as the Greater Glider, Squirrel Glider and the Feathertail Glider.
- Terrestrial Mammals
  - The five terrestrial mammals recorded in the 2023 survey is slightly above the long-term average of 4.6 species.
  - Species assemblages for all years show a minimum similarity of 60%, with several clusters of years showing similarities  $\geq 80\%$ .
  - One introduced pest species was detected during the 2023 survey; the Black Rat (*Rattus rattus*).
- Bats
  - The 15 bat species recorded in the 2023 survey is comparable to the long-term average of 15 species.
  - Species assemblages for all years show a minimum similarity of at least 68%, with three clusters of years showing similarities  $\geq 80\%$ . The 2023 results were 88% similar with 2014, 2016, and 2020. There is no clear pattern in the variation in the species assemblages over time.
- Birds
  - The 43 bird species recorded in the 2023 survey is below the long-term average of 54.9 species. Overall, the number of bird species recorded each year has remained relatively constant.
  - The cumulative number of species has increased steadily since the 2001 baseline survey but has flattened suggesting that most species likely to occur at the site have now been recorded, although a few new species are still being recorded.
  - Bird assemblages from the year group 2016 and the group 2019 to 2023 are the most dissimilar statistically to other years with all other years being at least 74% similar.

- Further breakdown based on general habitat preferences was undertaken during previous reporting periods. The analysis indicates that birds with generalist habitat preference remained consistent between 2005 and 2016 and a slow increase occurring over the past 4 to 5 years. For specialist species the previous 4 years of data record an increase in interior specialist species and a decrease in edge/open area specialist species. It is noted that this analysis was not undertaken during the reporting period but may be repeated during the next reporting period.
- It is possible that changes in disturbance from mining have resulted in specialist bird species to move in or out of the area. However, it is also possible that the change is a result of the large-scale clearing that commenced in the neighbouring industrial precinct in 2012 and remains ongoing. The creation of more edge habitat along the eastern edge of the Bushland Conservation Area as a result of the industrial precinct may have made the habitat less suitable for some specialist species or detectability of these species may have been lower. Wedgetail (2024a) notes that observed changes are likely related to a combination of these factors.

Nest box monitoring undertaken by Wedgetail within the BCA shows that fauna utilisation decreased over the 12-month period from 68.3% (2023) to 57.7% (2024) all nest boxes (45) being available. The decrease in utilisation may be due to the installation of new nest boxes and fauna taking time to take residence. Previous trends indicate nest box utilisation is often low for boxes less than 5 years old, finding it takes approximately 3 to 4 years for new nest boxes to reach ~50% utilisation and approximately 8 years for nest boxes to reach peak occupancy.

### Reportable Incidents

No reportable fauna related incidents were recorded during the 2023/2024 reporting period.

### Further Improvements

Improvements during the next reporting period will include ongoing assessment of the effectiveness of the installed nest boxes and completion of repairs or replacement as necessary. Consideration will also be given to the use of hollow creation to permanently replace nest boxes. General fauna survey within the Bushland Conservation Area will also continue together with statistical analysis of trends. There are no other proposed improvements to the management of fauna in the next reporting period.

## 6.7 HERITAGE

The following section outlines the commitment made by Donaldson for the protection of cultural and natural heritage of the area. A summary table showing the known Aboriginal cultural heritage sites is attached as **Appendix 2** of this report.

Thirty-one (31) sites of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage were previously identified on property owned by Donaldson. However, none of these sites were impacted by general management activities undertaken during the 2023/2024 Annual Review period.

There are no European heritage sites within the development consent or mining lease areas for the mine.

## Archaeological Studies

The mine has been the subject of four archaeological studies since 1998. During each study the principal aims were to:

- consult and involve the Aboriginal Community at every stage of the investigation and to provide continuous opportunities for the Aboriginal Community through the Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Council (MLALC) to participate in the interpretation and decision making process;
- identify and record by field survey the material evidence of Aboriginal cultural heritage or locations of potential evidence with the land owned by Donaldson;
- assess the archaeological significance and understand the Aboriginal significance of material evidence of Aboriginal cultural heritage of the study area; and
- assess the impacts of the mine on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage.

No further archaeological studies have been required since the cessation of mining operations.

## Management

In accordance with Conditions 84, 85 and 86 of the Development Consent, Donaldson has prepared an Aboriginal Sites Management Plan for the mine. Separate plans were produced for each year of operation at the mine. This provided a better opportunity to address specific issues for each year as well as an opportunity to review and address the management of Aboriginal Sites both inside the mine impact area and within associated bushland areas surrounding the mine.

The following control measures have been employed at the mine in order to ensure that reasonable duty of care is taken to ensure sites of Aboriginal cultural significance are not knowingly disturbed or destroyed.

- An Aboriginal Sites Management Plan was developed and implemented for the mine in consultation with the MLALC and other registered Aboriginal parties, where relevant.
- The MLALC is actively involved in the management of Aboriginal Sites at Donaldson.
- Representatives of the Lands Council were invited on site to monitor clearing and topsoil stripping activities during development and operation of the mine.

## Performance

Donaldson and MLALC enjoy a good working relationship and to date there have been no complaints or incidents recorded in relation to the management of sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage.

## Reportable Incidents and Further Improvements

No reportable heritage related incidents were recorded during the 2023/2024 reporting period and no further improvements are currently considered necessary.

## 7. WATER MANAGEMENT

### 7.1 WATER BUDGET

The mine area is primarily free draining with runoff from rehabilitated areas now returning to local catchments. With the exception of the localised Big Kahuna Dam catchment, all rehabilitated areas to the east of the site access road are now clean water catchments and drain off site. The Big Kahuna Dam continues to be used as an operational water storage for the Abel Underground Mine. Water from the Abel underground, Square Pit and West Pit are pumped to the Big Kahuna for storage.

During the reporting period the Abel underground mine transferred a total of 228ML into the Donaldson's Big Kahuna Dam. Runoff from the Abel surface facilities and water stored within the Square Pit and West Pit were also transferred to the Big Kahuna Dam as required. A total of 553ML of water was transferred from the Big Kahuna Dam to the Bloomfield mine site to be stored and used for operational purposes. There was no water discharged from the mine's licenced discharge point into Four Mile Creek.

0.7ML of potable water was imported to the Donaldson mine for the Abel Underground Mine operations during the reporting period. **Table 7.1** summarises the status of water storage at the beginning and end of the reporting period.

**Table 7.1**  
**Water Stored at Donaldson**

	Volumes Held (ML)		
	Start of Period	End of Period	Storage Capacity
Big Kahuna	368	313	400
Discharge to Creek	0	0	0
Contaminated Water	N/A	N/A	N/A

This data assumes that water in the West and Square Pits are managed and used by the Abel Underground Coal Mine. Water take is reported as part of the Annual Review for the Abel Underground Coal Mine

### 7.2 SURFACE WATER

#### Environmental Management

The Water Management Plan (Donaldson Coal Pty Ltd, 2019) details the measures employed by Donaldson to ensure protection of surface water on and around the mine site. Surface water monitoring has been ongoing since June 2000. A plan showing the location of the water monitoring sites is provided in **Appendix 1**. Routine sampling and analysis is undertaken at six (6) permanent surface water stream monitoring locations, when in flow. Opportunistic samples are also taken from various other locations around the mine area as required (sediment dams and mine water storage dams).

The surface stream water monitoring sites include:

- Four Mile Creek Upstream (FMCU) (EM1);
- Four Mile Creek Downstream (FMCD) (EM2);
- Scotch Dairy Creek Upstream (SDCU) (EM3);
- Scotch Dairy Creek Downstream (SDCD) (EM4);
- Weakleys Flat Creek Downstream (WFCD) (EM5); and
- Weakleys Flat Creek Upstream (WFCU) (EM6).

Samples collected from the six existing stream sites are analysed for Electrical Conductivity (EC), pH, Total Dissolved Solids (TDS), Total Suspended Solids (TSS) and Sulfates (SO<sub>4</sub>), on a monthly basis. A full suite analysis is also carried out on a quarterly basis and includes analysis for EC, pH, TDS, TSS, SO<sub>4</sub>, Calcium (Ca), Magnesium (Mg), Sodium (Na), Potassium (K), Chloride (Cl), Fluoride (F), Arsenic (As), Aluminium (Al), Barium (Ba), Cadmium (Cd), Cobalt (Co), Copper (Cu), Chromium (Cr), Iron (Fe), Manganese (Mn), Lead (Pb), Zinc (Zn), Total Alkalinity as CaCO<sub>3</sub>, Turbidity, Nitrates and Phosphates (total).

In addition to the physical and chemical water quality work, biological monitoring (macroinvertebrates) was undertaken between 2000 and 2019 as previously required under the Water Management Plan. The program consisted of:

- a pre-mining baseline survey;
- a construction survey; and
- twice yearly operational surveys.

In accordance with the revised Water Management Plan, biological monitoring ceased following the September 2019 monitoring survey as rehabilitation and rehabilitation establishment is now considered to have been completed at the mine. Results of previous monitoring is presented in the respective Annual Reviews and AEMRs.

In addition to ongoing water quality monitoring, the following control measures are employed at the mine to ensure an appropriate level of protection to surface water on and around the mine site.

- Minimal disturbance and progressive rehabilitation (noting operational activities have now ceased).
- Source separation in order to separate water of differing quality.
- Collection and containment of mine water for dust suppression at the Abel Underground Mine surface facilities and/or transfer to the Bloomfield Colliery for operational use, as required.

In addition to these measures, inspections of drainage channels and structures were undertaken throughout the reporting period. The outcomes of the site investigation by SLR to assess the sediment generating potential of the site and the conveyance channels was also completed with the *Sediment Dam Investigation* report finalised in June 2022. The recommendations of this report are summarised under 'Further Improvements'.

## Environmental Performance

A summary of three key parameters, required by EPL 12856, for the reporting period as well as the pre-mining baseline is included in **Table 7.2**. Monitoring results for pH and EC since the year 2000 are also presented graphically in **Figure 7.1** to assist in identifying trends.

### pH

During the reporting period monthly pH values have been variable with a number of pH values recorded below the ANZECC Guideline criteria for freshwater 95% level protection (pH 6.5). The lowest pH of 5.62 was recorded at the SDCD site in April 2024 where water flow was recorded as ‘trickle’. The yearly average pH for SDCD (pH 6.26) was below the ANZECC Guideline but within the range pre-mining pH range (pH 5.80 – pH 6.80). Samples collected at SDCU during the reporting period closely mirror the pH trends at the SDCD site (see **Figure 7.1**). The yearly average pH for SDCU (pH 6.65), within the ANZECC Guideline and the pre-mining range.

As noted during previous reporting periods, lower pH values appear to be correlated to periods of low flow within the creeks and could be the result of acidification from the surrounding soils which naturally have a pH in the order of 4.5 to 4.8 (GSS, 2015). In addition to SDCU and SDCD, WFCU recorded one exceedance (pH 8.66 in September 2024) of the upper limit for pH in the ANZECC Guideline and FMCU recorded one exceedance (pH 6.34 in February 2024) of the lower limit for pH in the ANZECC Guideline.

The results for all sites during the reporting period were generally consistent with or higher than pre-mining levels and consistently higher than the long-term mean. Notwithstanding, it is noted that there remained little divergence of the pH between the upstream and downstream monitoring locations during the reporting period, continuing the trend identified during the previous reporting period. Previous divergence of pH values at FMCU and FMCD is thought to be the result of leakage from the Stoney Pinch Reservoir (now Black Hill Reservoir) above the FMCD sample point. As repair works have been completed on the reservoir these effects have become less prominent and more readily reflect rainfall conditions that result in overflows from the reservoir.

### Electrical Conductivity

During the reporting period, the average electrical conductivity (EC) values at all monitoring locations remained below the long-term averages and remained within relevant ANZECC criteria.

Yearly average EC values were also generally consistent with pre-mining levels except for SDCU which recorded average values slightly higher than those recorded pre-mining. At SDCU, whilst the average EC during the period was slightly greater than pre-mining levels it remained well below the long-term trend.

Monthly values at the remaining sites were generally consistent with pre-mining levels with only minor variations above pre-mining levels.

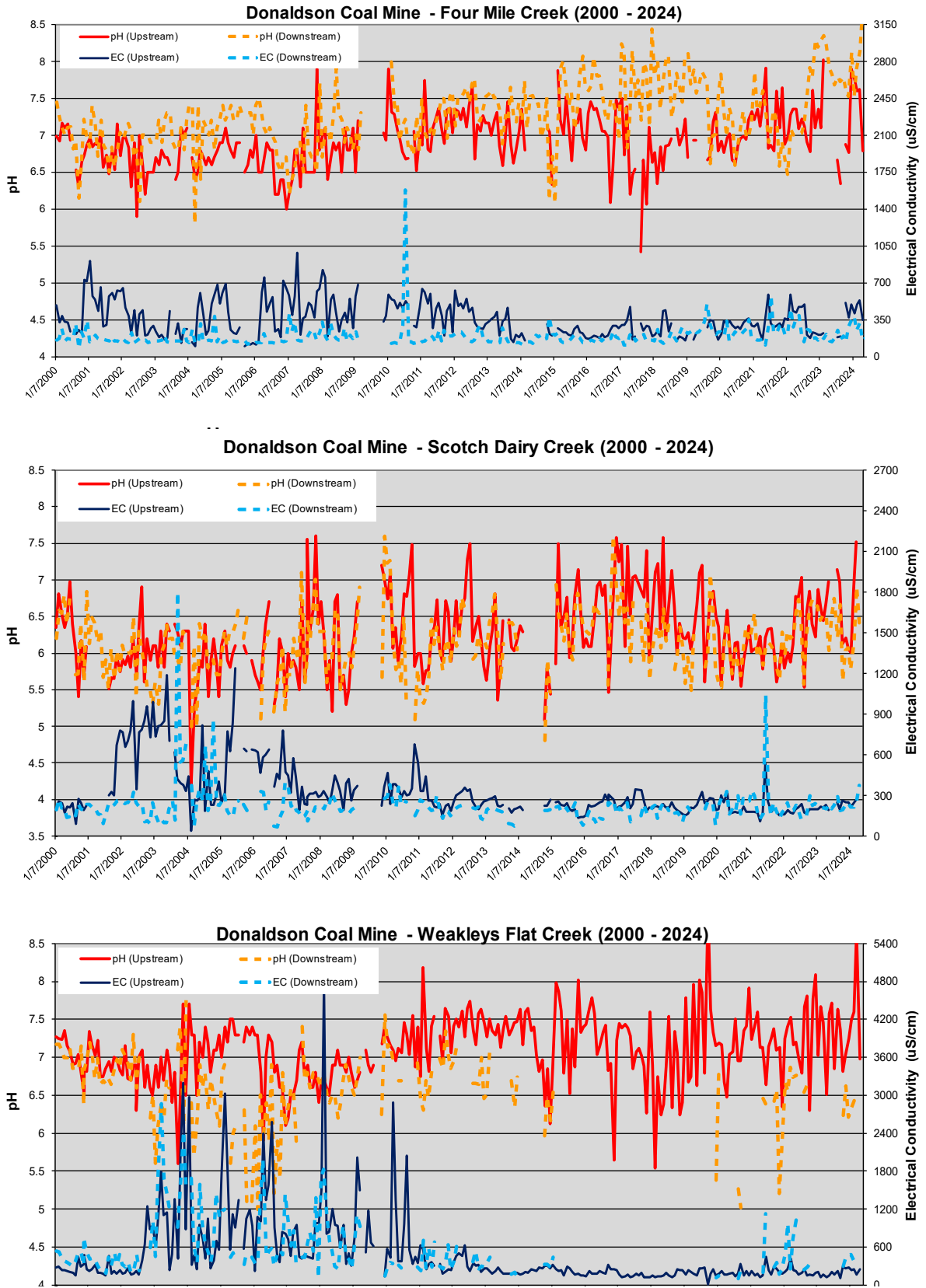


Figure 7.1 Surface Water Monitoring – 2000 to 2024

Table 7.2  
Summary of Surface Water Quality Monitoring Results – 2023/2024

Sample Site	Pre-mining	2023		2024										Mean 2023 / 2024	Long-term Mean
		Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct		
<b>Rainfall (mm)</b>															
-	-	84.0	76.6	30.8	83.2	27.0	219.0	142.6	100.0	58.8	44.4	67.6	48.4	-	-
<b>pH</b>															
FMCU	6.70 - 7.44	7.06	Dry	<b>6.67</b>	<b>6.34</b>	Dry	6.88	6.77	7.90	7.75	7.60	7.62	6.79	6.89	6.74
FMCD	<b>6.40</b> - 7.73	7.68	7.79	7.73	7.78	7.60	7.53	<b>8.13</b>	7.53	7.90	<b>8.14</b>	8.66	6.78	7.26	7.02
SDCU	<b>5.90</b> - 6.81	<b>6.98</b>	Dry	Dry	<b>7.14</b>	<b>6.96</b>	6.12	6.21	6.05	6.01	<b>6.88</b>	<b>7.52</b>	Dry	6.65	<b>5.89</b>
SDCD	<b>5.80</b> - 6.80	<b>6.03</b>	6.50	6.74	<b>6.21</b>	6.66	<b>5.62</b>	<b>6.03</b>	<b>6.07</b>	<b>5.78</b>	<b>6.15</b>	6.90	<b>6.41</b>	<b>6.26</b>	<b>5.90</b>
WFCU	6.60 - 7.49	7.58	7.71	6.85	7.63	7.36	6.82	7.02	7.25	7.49	<b>7.60</b>	<b>8.66</b>	6.98	7.41	6.84
WFCD	<b>6.40</b> - 7.28	Dry	Dry	Dry	Dry	Dry	6.23	6.62	6.21	6.32	6.44	Dry	Dry	<b>6.36</b>	<b>6.15</b>
<b>Electrical Conductivity (mS/cm)</b>															
FMCU	265 – 522	<b>161.10</b>	Dry	<b>180.70</b>	<b>192.30</b>	Dry	511.20	369.30	494.70	407.20	492.60	531.40	350.30	369.08	354.60
FMCD	<b>120</b> - 265	172.10	249.10	161.80	196.80	143.20	<b>277.90</b>	<b>352.90</b>	<b>381.40</b>	246.50	<b>323.40</b>	159.40	168.40	223.57	194.30
SDCU	<b>71</b> - 200	191.80	Dry	Dry	<b>246.50</b>	194.80	<b>258.40</b>	<b>249.10</b>	<b>248.40</b>	<b>219.20</b>	<b>244.70</b>	<b>268.80</b>	Dry	<b>235.74</b>	<b>326.50</b>
SDCD	145 - 270	230.00	198.30	226.40	<b>291.00</b>	186.10	196.20	228.30	243.20	213.80	210.70	260.00	<b>374.20</b>	238.18	220.70
WFCU	200 - 310	<b>148.50</b>	210.10	<b>169.30</b>	215.30	<b>111.70</b>	283.80	255.20	275.10	229.90	248.10	<b>165.00</b>	240.20	212.68	312.20
WFCD	230 - 546	Dry	Dry	Dry	Dry	Dry	299.70	431.30	462.00	478.70	367.70	Dry	Dry	407.88	<b>578.60</b>
<b>Total Suspended Solids (mg/L)</b>															
FMCU	32 - 180	<b>12</b>	Dry	<b>10</b>	<5	Dry	<b>6</b>	<5	<5	<5	<b>5</b>	<5	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>24</b>
FMCD	2 - 32	<5	14	<5	<5	<5	<b>66</b>	5	<5	<5	<5	<b>43</b>	14	28	30
SDCU	9 – 47	16	Dry	Dry	42	47	<5	5	<5	<5	19	13	Dry	24	<b>127</b>
SDCD	12 - 1283	95	47	93	24	62	10	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<5	14	34	55	40	88
WFCU	1 – 3	<5	<b>5</b>	<5	<b>32</b>	<5	5	<5	<5	<5	15	<5	<5	<b>14</b>	<b>24</b>
WFCD	3 - 17	Dry	Dry	Dry	Dry	Dry	28	34	<5	<5	34	Dry	Dry	<b>32</b>	<b>115</b>
<p><b>Bold</b> values exceed pre-mining levels. <b>Red</b> values exceed ANZECC Guideline criteria for lowland rivers (pH 6.5 to 8.0, and EC 125µS/cm to 2,200µS/cm). NS = No Sample</p> <p>FMCU = Four Mile Creek Upstream, FMCD = Four Mile Creek Downstream, SDCU = Scotch Dairy Creek Upstream, SDCD = Scotch Dairy Creek Downstream, WFCU = Weakly's Flat Creek Upstream, WFCD = Weakly's Flat Creek Downstream.</p>															



Since monitoring commenced in July 2000, at the Four Mile Creek and Scotch Dairy Creek sites, with a few exceptions, the EC at the downstream sites has been consistently lower or similar to the upstream sites with no obvious trends evident (see **Figure 7.1**). However, since 2020 the EC at SDCD was regularly slightly higher than that of SDCU (two recorded occasions during 2023/2024). This appears to be a function of reduced EC upstream at SDCU rather than an increase in EC at SDCD which remains within pre-mining levels.

Previous monitoring results also show that, between 2003 and 2010, both the upstream and downstream EC levels within Weakleys Flat Creek varied to a substantially greater extent than the Four Mile and Scotch Dairy Creek sites. However, since 2011, EC levels in Weakleys Flat Creek Upstream have remained relatively consistent. Samples for the reporting period maintain this trend.

Overall, the available results suggest that the mine has had a negligible impact on the EC of surface waters in the surrounding area.

#### Total Suspended Solids

During the reporting period, TSS values at monitoring locations were generally low and similar to the respective pre-mining levels and the 2023/2024 mean for the reporting period remained below the long-term mean for all monitoring sites. One exceedance of the TSS objective of 50mg/L was recorded at FMCD and three exceedances of the objective were recorded at SDCD during the reporting period. The highest value recorded was for SDCD during November 2023 (95mg/L) which remained within the pre-mining levels for this downstream location (12mg/L – 1283mg/L). High TSS levels are not considered to reflect mine-related impacts as no mining operations or mine-related disturbance or discharge occurred during the reporting period.

### **Reportable Incidents and Further Improvements**

No reportable incidents relating to surface water were recorded during the 2023/2024 reporting period.

In relation to further improvements, the *Sediment Dam Investigations* report finalised by SLR in June 2022 included a range of recommendations relating to: updated water quality criteria for the sediment dams; remediation works for erosion; liaising with TransGrid in relation to erosion in the easement; and confirmation of harvestable rights for retained structures. During the next reporting period, Donaldson will undertake a review the *Sediment Dam Investigations* report and engage specialist to inspect/monitor the condition of the sediment dams and other relevant water management areas. Following the review, the recommended management actions may be confirmed and/or revised and a program for implementation of these recommendations will be prepared as soon as practicable.

## **7.3 GROUNDWATER**

### **Environmental Management**

The Water Management Plan (Donaldson Coal Pty Ltd, 2019) details the measures employed by Donaldson to ensure protection of groundwater on and around the mine site.

Groundwater monitoring has been ongoing since June 2000. There are six (6) current monitoring sites, the locations of which are provided in **Appendix 1**.

The groundwater piezometers are monitored to determine impacts on both Standing Water Levels (SWL) and groundwater quality. A regional site, REG DPZ1, is also included in the monitoring program and is located in Avalon Estate approximately 1.2km north of the mine.

Samples collected from the six bores are analysed for EC, pH, TDS, TSS and Sulfates (SO<sub>4</sub>), on a monthly basis. A full suite analysis is also carried out on a quarterly basis and includes analysis for EC, pH, TDS, TSS, Sulfates (SO<sub>4</sub>), Calcium (Ca), Magnesium (Mg), Sodium (Na), Potassium (K), Chloride (Cl), Fluoride (F), Arsenic (As), Aluminium (Al), Barium (Ba), Cadmium (Cd), Cobalt (Co), Copper (Cu), Chromium (Cr), Iron (Fe), Manganese (Mn), Lead (Pb), Zinc (Zn), Total Alkalinity as CaCO<sub>3</sub> and Turbidity.

The standing water level of each of the monitoring bores is measured each month, as metres below ground level.

## Environmental Performance

Monthly water monitoring results were routinely reviewed to determine whether there were any changes as a result of activities at the mine.

A summary of the three key parameters required by the EPL (Standing Water Level (SWL), pH and EC) for the 2023/2024 reporting period, along with the pre-mining baseline, is included in **Table 7.3**. Monitoring results since commencement of monitoring are also presented graphically in **Figure 7.2**.

It is noted that sampling was not undertaken on two occasions for bore DPZ-3 and two occasions for bore DPZ-10. For DPZ-3, access was prevented due to a windrow impacting the bore in March, and operating heavy machinery prevented safe access in July. For DPZ-10, access to the bore was prevented due to road upgrade works on John Renshaw Drive restricting primary access and high rainfall making the secondary access track unsafe for vehicle passage.

### Standing Water Levels

REGDPZ-1: Regional control bore located in strata well below the Donaldson Seams. Shows groundwater level trends that generally reflect long-term rainfall patterns, declining gradually from 2000 to 2005 (a period of below average rainfall); rising gradually from 2007 to 2013 (a period of slightly above average rainfall) before plateauing between 2013 and 2016; and declining gradually since 2016, reflecting regional drought conditions. Since 2020 groundwater levels have been gradually rising reflecting high levels of rainfall received throughout 2020 to 2023. During the reporting period, groundwater levels were relatively stable, ranging from 20.08 to 19.32 metres below ground level (mbgl).

DPZ3: Located in the open cut area and screened in coal measures below Donaldson Seam. An unexplained rise in water level was recorded from 2004 to 2010 followed by a decline which was a response to mining from the Donaldson Open Cut. Between 2015 and 2018 the SWL remained relatively stable and slightly higher than pre-mining levels. During the reporting period, groundwater levels were relatively stable, ranging from 11.39 to 9.13mbgl and slightly above pre-mining levels.

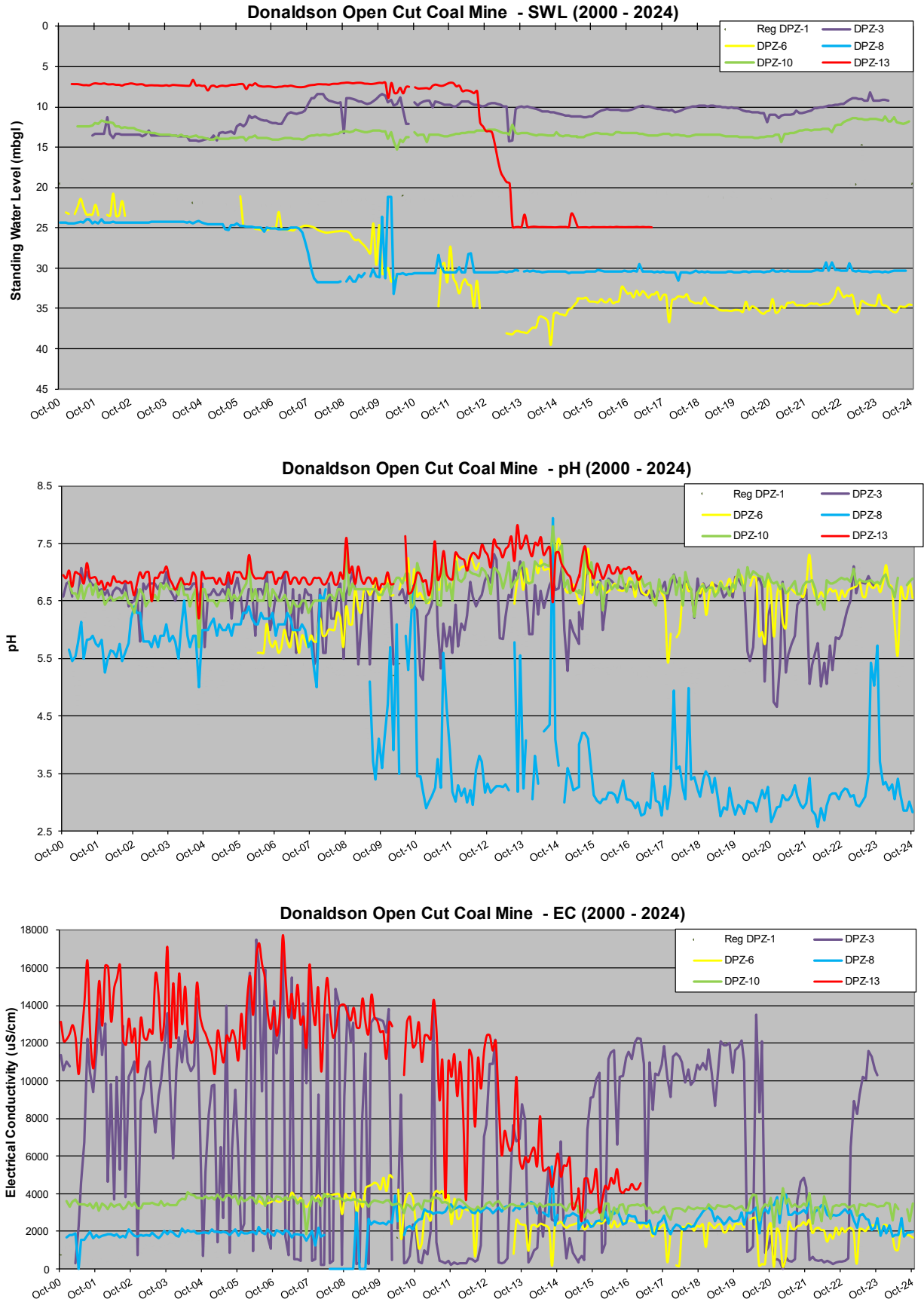


Figure 7.2 Groundwater Monitoring – 2000 to 2024

**Table 7.3**  
**Summary of Groundwater Monitoring Results – 2023/2024**

Sample Site	Pre-mining	Site Average <sup>1</sup>	2023		2024									
			Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
<b>Rainfall (mm)</b>														
-	-	-	84.00	76.60	30.80	83.20	27.00	219.00	142.60	100.00	58.80	44.40	67.60	48.40
<b>Standing Water Level (m below natural ground surface)</b>														
REG DPZ-1	N/A	20.97	19.82	19.88	19.93	20.00	20.07	20.08	19.70	19.52	19.32	19.45	19.44	19.47
DPZ3	12.05 - 11.51	10.78	9.13	9.28	9.30	9.46	9.60	N/A	11.39	11.38	N/A	11.31	9.20	11.10
DPZ6	N/A	31.49	33.28	34.5	34.61	34.81	35.19	35.43	35.40	34.78	34.80	34.78	34.51	34.55
DPZ8	24.35	28.66	30.46	30.47	30.46	30.49	30.47	30.48	30.46	30.35	30.32	30.34	30.33	30.32
DPZ10	12.4	13.19	11.80	11.28	11.92	11.99	12.05	12.00	11.77	N/A	N/A	11.42	11.36	11.40
DPZ13	7.01 - 7.25	12.05	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>pH</b>														
REG DPZ-1	N/A	5.48	5.16	5.62	5.47	5.34	5.27	5.25	5.01	5.10	5.51	5.45	5.89	5.25
DPZ3	5.99 - 6.96	6.47	6.93	6.94	6.88	6.84	6.66	N/A	6.74	6.55	N/A	6.68	6.61	5.10
DPZ6	N/A	6.57	6.65	6.82	7.12	6.79	6.73	6.06	5.56	6.73	6.56	6.54	6.82	6.55
DPZ8	5.46 - 5.66	4.28	3.70	3.31	3.35	3.21	3.31	3.05	3.41	3.14	2.86	2.85	3.01	2.83
DPZ10	6.48 - 6.97	6.74	6.79	6.92	6.96	6.76	6.71	6.56	6.90	N/A	N/A	6.77	6.84	6.89
DPZ13	6.67 - 7.22	7.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Electrical Conductivity (mS/cm)</b>														
REG DPZ-1	N/A	1579	1 873	1 916	1 963	1 964	1 554	1 990	1 750	1 877	1 905	1 933	1 466	1 943
DPZ3	10200 - 11350	6748	3 890	9 540	11 100	11 200	8 800	N/A	6 890	6 270	N/A	4 630	2 480	2 389
DPZ6	N/A	2578	1 819	2 307	2 330	2 128	1 816	1 052	1 031	2 124	1 839	1 814	1 769	1 667
DPZ8	1690 - 1820	2465	1 785	2 262	1 901	2 307	1 721	1 818	1 791	2 700	1 727	1 927	1 947	1 975
DPZ10	3670	3416	3 350	3 360	3 510	3 480	2 580	3 440	3 190	N/A	N/A	3 180	2 540	3 490
DPZ13	12200 - 13750	10939	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1. Since monitoring commenced at that site. <span style="float: right;">N/A = Not Accessible</span>														

DPZ6: Showed drawdown during latter stages of the Donaldson Open Cut and then more pronounced drawdown once development of the Abel Underground South Mains started in April 2008. A partial recovery was subsequently evident during 2013 to 2016, most likely due to recovery within in the completed Donaldson Open Cut. Levels during the reporting period remained generally consistent with the ranges recorded since 2016. During the reporting period, groundwater levels were relatively stable, ranging from 33.28 to 35.43mbgl.

DPZ8: Screened in Donaldson and Big Ben Seams. Responded to mining in the Donaldson Open Cut in 2007 and then slight post-mining recovery. The water level has remained steady since 2014.

DPZ10: Screened in the Beresfield Seam and shows modest open cut mining effect from 2001 to 2006, then modest recovery, and more recent response to Abel Underground mining from 2011. The SWL has remained relatively stable since 2011, with a steadying of groundwater level shown over the reporting period following a slight increase during the 2021/2022 period, likely in response to more stable rainfall compared to the previous reporting period. The 2023/2024 water levels are consistent with the previous reporting period and remain steady.

DPZ13: Screened in Donaldson Seam overburden, and showed no response to open cut mining, but clear response to Abel Underground mining from early 2012. Groundwater level has remained consistent since 2013. Access has not been available to DPZ13 since April 2017 due to ongoing restricted access to the landholding. A commercial subdivision project commencing in 2023 destroyed DPZ13 monitoring bore. DPZ13 was removed as of December 2024 and will no longer form part of the monitoring network. Data will be retained to allow for long-term comparison of trends.

### Groundwater Quality

Salinity (EC and TDS) varies over a wide range from bore to bore, but within bores Reg DPZ1, DPZ6, DPZ8, and DPZ10, salinity generally is quite stable over time.

Salinity levels within DPZ3 remained variable with large fluctuations as previously recorded. During the reporting period EC levels rapidly increased from December 2023 and decreased from May 2024 likely due to the ingress of rainwater experienced as result of the high rainfall recorded in April, May and June 2024 lowering the salinity in the bore. DPZ3 is situated within the Snowy Hydro Gas Pipeline easement and disturbance surrounding this bore occurred during the reporting period. Upper EC levels at DPZ3 remained within previously recorded levels.

A downward trend in EC is observed at bores DPZ6 and DPZ13, starting in 2010 or 2011, which could be due to enhanced recharge following drawdowns in the coal measures as a result of open cut mining. The downward trend has levelled out from the start of 2015.

Conversely, a rise in EC was observed at DPZ8, starting in 2008 or 2009, which is almost certainly related to open cut mining. However, the EC in DPZ8 has not continued rising, having stabilised at about 500µS/cm to 1 000µS/cm higher than pre-2008.

Apart from the EC rise in DPZ8 in 2008, the monitoring has not indicated any rising trend in salinity in any bore, apart from the regional control bore REGDPZ1, which experienced a rise between 2000 and 2007, unrelated to any mining activity, and is thought to be a result of increased urbanisation.

Likewise, although there are some pH variations from bore to bore, the monitoring has generally reported relatively consistent pH values at individual bores since 2016. In the past, both DPZ3 and DPZ8 show changes in pH that are likely related to mining or associated activities.

The pH values reported from DPZ3 were generally in the range 6.5 to 7.0 until around 2006, when the pH started to be more erratic, and more frequent lower pH values than previously, possibly indicating slightly more acidic conditions. Since around May 2006, pH values at DPZ3 have been generally in the range 5.2 to 7.2. During the 2023/2024 reporting period, pH levels within DPZ3 ranged between 5.10 and 6.93.

The pH values reported from DPZ8 were generally in the range 5.0 to 6.5 until late 2007, when the pH started to be more erratic, and generally much lower than previously, indicating more acidic conditions. Water levels in DPZ8 dropped sharply in September 2007, at the same time that EC noticeably increased and pH started to be erratic and eventually fell to a much lower level. Since February 2009, pH values at DPZ8 have been generally in the range 3.0 to 4.0 albeit with a number of higher outlier values, but significantly lower than the pre-mining levels. This is most likely due to the open cut exposing sulphides or other acid-forming minerals present in the coal seams or interburden strata to oxidation, leading to the reduction in pH at the time that mining reached the vicinity of this bore. This is an expected outcome given the nature of the geology, of which some strata are known to be net acid producing, and the predicted drawdown resulting from mining operations. During the 2022/2023 reporting period, DPZ8 recorded a significant increase in pH from ~pH 3 to above pH 5 during the August, September, and October 2023 monitoring rounds. This was consistent with previous rapid increases. During the 2023/2024 reporting period, the pH values dropped again with a recorded range of 2.83 to 3.70.

### **Reportable Incidents and Further Improvements**

No reportable groundwater incidents were recorded during the 2023/2024 reporting period and no future improvements to groundwater management are currently planned.

## 8. REHABILITATION

### 8.1 REHABILITATION PERFORMANCE DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD

Assorted infrastructure was removed from site as part of the final rehabilitation activities during the 2013/14 reporting period. This included the removal of fuel storage tanks, traffic control boom gates and a number of bitumen and dirt roads. No additional infrastructure was removed during the current reporting period. As at the end of the reporting, the mine-related infrastructure remaining within ML 1461 included the following.

- Administration office.
- Workshop.
- Core shed.
- Selected access roads.

These infrastructures are not proposed to be removed during the near term until their potential utilisation for future land uses is determined (discussed below).

Rehabilitation works previously completed, as outlined in the *Mine Closure Plan for Donaldson Open Cut*, include the following.

- Excavation of waste rock and contaminated material to the West Pit.
- Reshaping of the land surface to as near as possible to natural topography.
- Spreading of topsoil on reshaped surfaces.
- Spreading of a seed mix of local tree and shrub species, as well as fast growing, sterile groundcovers which grow rapidly to provide erosion control, of the remaining 27.7ha of rehabilitated area.

The post rehabilitation land uses for Donaldson include conservation area, open spaces and light industrial area. The rehabilitated open cut area is completely vegetated with native shrubs and trees. These areas will be conserved and managed similar to the adjacent Bushland Conservation Area. Subject to future approval, the areas around the former open cut maintenance workshop and administration building may be used as a light industrial area.

The West Pit and Square Pit have been made safe and left for use by the Abel Underground Mine which will be responsible for ongoing management. No specific management was required during the reporting period.

In October 2023 a section of Donaldson rehabilitation area was transferred to Snowy Hydro Limited for the Kurri Kurri Lateral Gas Pipeline. The Rehabilitation Management Plan including the Final Landform and Rehabilitation Plan and corresponding spatial domain and area calculations were updated to reflect the removal of this area from the Donaldson rehabilitation area.

No further areas remain to be rehabilitated as part of the Donaldson Coal Mine operation and no additional rehabilitation works were undertaken during the 2023/2024 reporting period.

**Figure 8.1** shows the final landform and current revegetation status. A summary of the total area of rehabilitation is provided in **Table 8.1**.

**Table 8.1**  
**Rehabilitation Summary (Cumulative)**

Mine Area Type	Previous Reporting Period (Actual)	This Reporting Period (Actual)	Next Reporting Period (Forecast)
	Year 19 (ha)	Year 20 (ha)	Year 21 (ha)
Total mine footprint	303	303	303.0
Total active disturbance	32.2	32.2	32.2
Land being prepared for rehabilitation	0	0	0
Land under active rehabilitation	269	269	269
Completed rehabilitation	0	0	0

Note: 1. Area calculations are now undertaken annually as part of the Annual Rehabilitation Report and Forward Program prepared in accordance with the *Mining Act 1992*.

As noted in **Table 8.1**, the ‘active disturbance’ area for the Donaldson Coal Mine includes the Square Pit (27ha) and West Pit (33ha). The areas encompassing these pits will be subject to closure and rehabilitation in accordance with the respective Rehabilitation Management Plans and *Abel Underground Mine and Donaldson Open Cut Mine – Closure Strategy for the West and Square Pits* with final closure scenarios to be confirmed depending on the closure or resumption of mining operations at the Abel Underground Mine (currently under care and maintenance). The rehabilitation security for these areas will continue to be held against Mining Lease 1461.

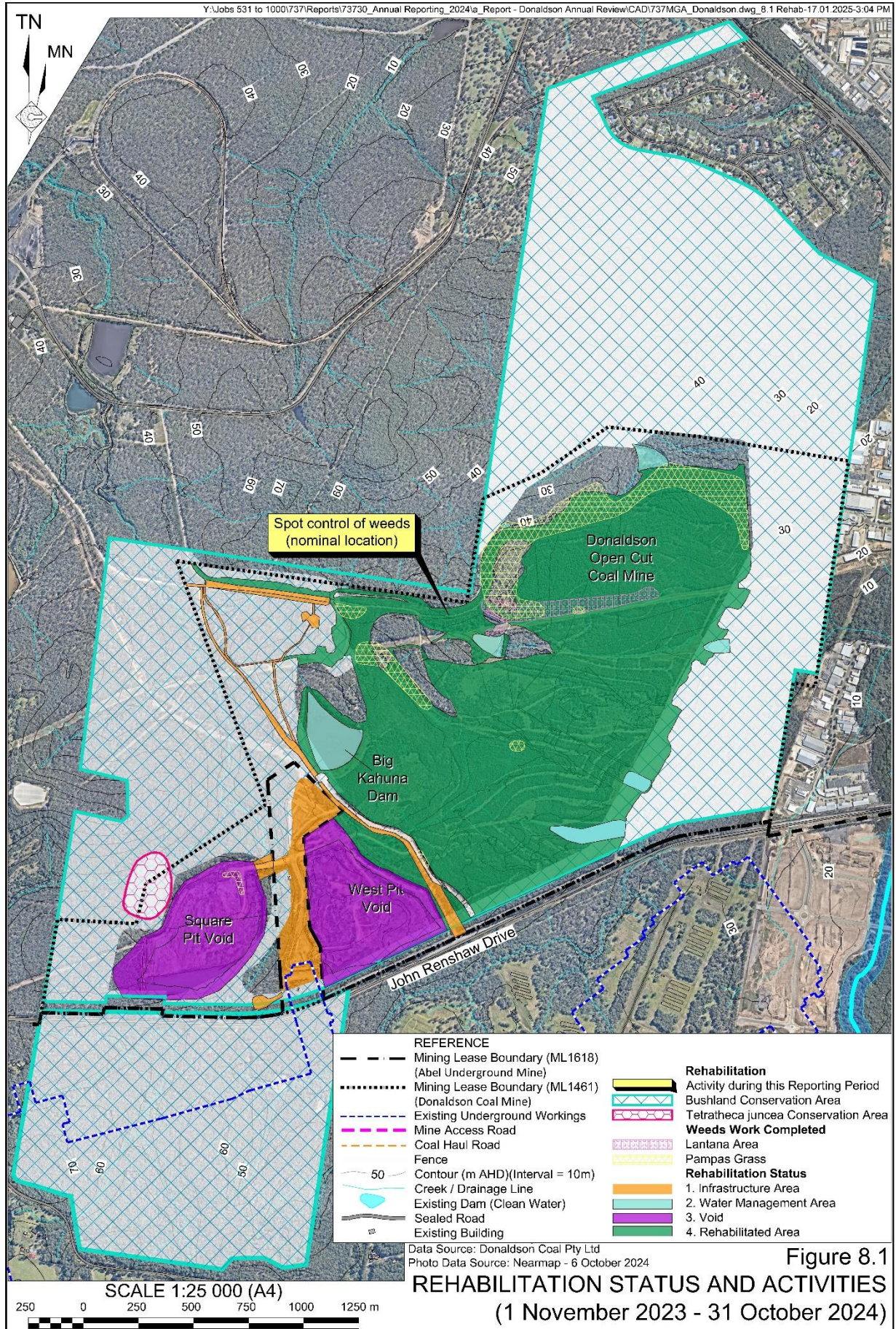
## 8.2 REHABILITATION MONITORING

Assessment of rehabilitation performance (fauna and habitat) was conducted by Wedgetail (2024d) in November 2023 (see **Appendix 6**). Rehabilitation performance (flora and soil) monitoring is scheduled on a 2-yearly basis and was last undertaken during the 2023 reporting period. Updated flora and soil monitoring will be reported as part of the next Annual Review.

The fauna and habitat monitoring undertaken annually aims to determine the effectiveness of the rehabilitation program in re-establishing pre-mining / natural biodiversity levels and to determine the habitat requirements of recolonising fauna. Surveys are undertaken within a total of four monitoring plots, including one control plot, and four nesting box plots. Monitoring commenced in 2008.

The results of these assessments are compared with the completion criteria adopted by Donaldson. These criteria cover soil quality, vegetation, growth rates, species diversity and stem densities. A summary of the results of the November 2023 fauna and habitat monitoring compared to the previous completion criteria is provided in **Table 8.2**, including results from the most recent flora and soil biennial reports as relevant.





**Table 8.2**  
**Status of Monitoring Against Completion Criteria**

Page 1 of 2

Feature	Completion Criteria	Current Status
General	Stable landform	All monitoring plots were observed to be 'stable' with no signs of significant erosion.
	Effective drainage	The rehabilitated areas are effectively draining with no evidence of pooling water.
	Resilience to drought episodes in rehabilitated area.	No signs of drought stress was documented by Wedgetail during the previous monitoring. Note drought stress was not monitored during the current monitoring period.
Flora	Re-establishment of a dense and diverse mixture of local native understorey and overstorey vegetation species, specifically four (4) overstorey and four (4) understorey species in each monitoring plot.	Plot 1 (control) = 23 understorey and 8 overstorey species. Plots 2 to 10 = 12 to 20 understorey and 6 to 15 overstorey species.
	Limited presence of weeds	Increasing evidence of weeds ( <i>Lantana camara</i> , <i>Cortaderia selloana</i> , <i>Senecio madagascariensis</i> and annual weeds) noted in Plots 2, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10. Plot 2 was overrun by Lantana and could not be surveyed in the 2022 monitoring.
	Tree/shrub densities of 3 000 stems/ha after 5 years and 1 000 stems/ha after 15 years.	Plot 1 (control) = 3,100. Plots 2 to 10 range from 2,650 to 14,650. Therefore stem density meets the completion criteria.
	Evidence of natural regeneration in at least four species.	Natural recruitment was observed in all plots with seedlings and saplings apparent and indicating more than one round of germination. Flowers and fruit were also observed and an increase in species indicates colonisation by natural seed vectors (e.g. wind and fauna).
Fauna	Reinvasion of rehabilitated area by native fauna.	In 2023 a total of 44 fauna species were recorded, above the yearly average of 39.3. Statistical analysis of the similarity of fauna diversity between the analogue site (Q1) and rehabilitation monitoring sites (Q2 to Q4) show that in 2011 the rehabilitation quadrats were 20% similar to the analogue site, increasing to >40% in 2015. In 2023 Quadrats Q2, Q3 and Q4 have a similarity of 60% while collectively sharing only 40% similarity to the remnant Quadrat Q1. As habitat complexity and vegetation structure increases in the rehabilitation areas it is expected the similarity of Quadrats Q2, Q3 and Q4 with Quadrat Q1 will continue to increase. These results show that the rehabilitation areas are trending towards the remnant forest analogue site conditions, with some year-to-year variation.
Soil Loss	Minimal erosion and soil movement, specifically soil loss from less than 40t/ha/year	Soil loss per annum for Plots 2 to 10 was 13, 43, 50, and 150 tonnes/ha. However, Plots 1, 6, 7, and 10 all recorded net soil gain (between 23 and 50 tonnes/ha) rather than loss in 2022.  The average soil loss/gain over the eight plots is a gain of 31 tonnes of soil per hectare since 2019. Therefore Wedgetail conclude that this parameter can be considered to have been met.
Soil Quality	Soil pH to be no lower than 10% of analogue plot pH after 5 years.	Plot 1 (analogue) – pH 4.54 Plots 2 to 10 – pH 4.33 to 5.03 Therefore the pH for all plots meet the completion criteria.

**Table 8.2 (Cont'd)**  
**Status of Monitoring Against Completion Criteria**

Page 2 of 2

Feature	Completion Criteria	Current Status
Soil Quality (Cont'd)	Conductivity of replaced soil to be below 900uS/cm after 5 years	EC for all plots ranged from 27.1 to 77.1µS/cm and therefore meets the completion criteria.
	Surface layer to be free of any hazardous material to a depth of at least 1m.	There has been no evidence of hazardous material following deep ripping (recorded in 2019).
	Runoff water conductivity to be less than 1 000µS/cm after 5 years.	Internal monitoring of the retained on-site sediment dams confirms ECs generally ranging between 211µS/cm and 893µS/cm.
	Soil nitrogen and phosphorous levels to be within 20% of levels in analogue site after 5 years.	All plots had nitrogen levels similar to or above the analogue plot value and met the completion criteria. The phosphorous levels within all rehabilitation plots remained lower than 20% of the analogue site, except for Plot 2. Phosphorous levels at both the analogue and rehabilitation plots decreased to levels previously recorded in 2015 (following a spike in 2017 – potentially due to sampling technique).
Pollution	Soil should not be a source of pollutants. Quality of water leaving the site to be in accordance with EPL requirements.	No non-compliance with EPL surface water quality requirements have been recorded with no discharges required. Internal due diligence monitoring within the on-site sediment dams confirms that all measured ECs and the majority of total suspended solid results during the reporting period would be compliant with discharge criteria. The pH of the dams are slightly acidic but generally consistent with surrounding watercourses.
Source: Wedgetail (2023d and 2023e), Donaldson Coal		

To date, the monitoring has found that several of the rehabilitated areas have already met the completion criteria and that all rehabilitated areas assessed are on track to meet the previously required completion criteria.

It is noted that, following the approval of the proposed Rehabilitation Completion Criteria Statement prepared as part of the Rehabilitation Management Plan, the ongoing monitoring will be reviewed to support the validation of these criteria.

### 8.3 ACTIONS FOR THE NEXT REPORTING PERIOD

#### 8.3.1 Rehabilitation

The primary activity planned to occur in the next reporting period is monitoring as outlined in the Flora and Fauna Management Plan and Rehabilitation Management Plan for the mine together with ongoing weed control, in particular for Lantana. Additional mine closure planning, including commencement of a rehabilitation materials balance report, will be undertaken following cessation of the ongoing use of these areas by the Abel Underground Coal Mine.

#### 8.3.2 Monitoring

Rehabilitation monitoring required to be undertaken at the mine under the development consent and other regulatory documents will continue to be carried out in the 2024/2025 reporting period.

## 9. COMMUNITY

No complaints, matters of concern, or environmental queries were raised with Donaldson during the 2023/2024 reporting period.

In accordance with the conditions of the mine's development consent, Donaldson established a community consultative committee for the mine. The last committee meeting was held on 7 August 2013. No meetings were held during the reporting period and further meetings are currently deemed unnecessary.

No other specific community engagement activities relating to the mine were undertaken during the reporting period.

Given that coal mining activities ceased in April 2013 and rehabilitation was completed by March 2014, there has been negligible social impact to the community throughout the reporting period. As a result, during the reporting period Donaldson did not:

- provide community donations;
- need to conduct mitigation works to address any community impacts; or
- undertake any mine-related property acquisitions.

However, continued community benefits have occurred as a result of the utilisation of locally based employees for completion of maintenance activities within the rehabilitated areas. Additionally, contractors who are engaged to conduct routine and non-routine land management works are also sourced locally.

## 10. INDEPENDENT AUDIT

The last and final independent environmental audit of the mine was undertaken in March 2015 following the completion of mining in 2013 and rehabilitation in 2014. The audit found a high degree of compliance and identified the conditions of the development consent which were considered to remain active following the completion of mining. These remaining conditions have been treated as ‘recommendations’ and the status of these conditions is outlined within the 2014/2015 AEMR and further updated in **Table 10.1**.

**Table 10.1**  
**2015 Independent Audit Recommendations and Status Update**

Page 1 of 2

Cond No.	Development Consent Condition	Comment	Update
63(xiv)	<p><b>Biological Monitoring</b></p> <p>The Applicant shall prepare and implement a detailed monitoring program for groundwater and surface water</p> <p>(xiv) monitoring of macro-invertebrates and vegetation in accordance with protocols developed for the Hunter SIGNAL biological assessment criteria, with an assessment of inflows to the wetlands.</p>	<p>The biological monitoring will continue in accordance with Development Consent condition 63(xiv) “for a period of at least five years after the completion of mining, or other such period as determined by the Director-General.”</p>	<p>Monitoring has been undertaken for period of at least 5 years from completion of mining (i.e. until April 2018). Annual monitoring ceased at the end of the 2019 reporting period in accordance with the approved updated Water Management Plan.</p> <p><b>Status: Complete</b></p>
69	<p><b>Tetratheca juncea Management Plan</b></p> <p>The Plan shall be consistent with the Flora and Fauna Management Plan and include measures for fire management.</p>	<p>The ongoing control measures employed at the Donaldson Coal Mine site ensure a high level of conservation for the <i>Tetratheca juncea</i>.</p>	<p>The <i>Tetratheca juncea</i> area is contained within the Bushland Conservation Area (BCA). Refer to comment below.</p>
72(ii) & (iii)	<p><b>Bushland Conservation Area Management</b></p> <p>(ii) retain management and ownership of the land for a minimum of 36 years from the commencement of construction, unless other arrangements are agreed in accordance with Condition 73; and</p> <p>(iii) prepare and implement a Management Plan for that area in consultation with OEH and to the satisfaction of the Director-General, during the period in which the Applicant is responsible for management.</p>	<p>Donaldson Coal Pty Ltd will retain management and ownership of the land for a minimum of 36 years from the commencement of construction, unless other arrangements are agreed in accordance with Development Consent condition 73.</p>	<p>The BCA is currently being managed in accordance with the BCA Management Plan and will be maintained for the period as per Condition 73 (i.e. until January 2037 or as agreed).</p>
78	<p><b>Rehabilitation</b></p> <p>The Flora and Fauna Management Plan shall also include a Rehabilitation Plan that details the measures to be undertaken to progressively rehabilitate disturbed areas of the mine to replicate the original vegetation cover that existed before mining occurred. The Applicant shall be responsible for the management and monitoring of the rehabilitated mine site until such time as the Director-General agrees that restoration has been successful.</p>	<p>The Rehabilitation Plan is included in the Mining Operations Plans (MOP) and amendments for the Donaldson Coal Mine. The current MOP is for May 2014 to May 2021.</p> <p>Recommendation:</p> <p>As the reporting on the Mining Operations Plan is required under the Mining Lease, the rehabilitation progress and monitoring will be reported to the DRE and it is recommended that approval be sought from DPE to submit this MOP report to DPE to satisfy this condition.</p>	<p>Currently the Annual Reviews are provided to the DPHI compliance team and will continue to be provided.</p> <p>The Annual Rehabilitation Report and Forward Program are provided to the Resources Regulator.</p>

**Table 10.1 (Cont'd)**  
**2015 Independent Audit Recommendations and Status Update**

Page 2 of 2

<b>Cond No.</b>	<b>Development Consent Condition</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Update</b>
114	<p><b>ANNUAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT REPORT</b></p> <p>The Applicant shall prepare and submit an Annual Environmental Management Report (AEMR) throughout the life of the mine to the satisfaction of the Director-General. The AEMR shall review the performance of the mine against the Environmental Management Strategy and the Conditions of this Consent, and other licences and approvals relating to the mine.</p>	<p>The preparation of the Annual Environmental Management Report for the Donaldson Coal Mine will be required unless an exemption is obtained from the Director-General/Secretary of DPE.</p> <p><i>Recommendation:</i></p> <p>It should be considered that reporting on the rehabilitation progress, the biological monitoring and bushland conservation area could be achieved by submitting the expert consultant reports and placing the reports on the Donaldson Coal website.</p>	<p>Donaldson is continuing to prepare the full Annual Review, however, this recommendation will be further considered in future reporting periods.</p>

Email correspondence from the (then) Department of Planning dated 31 October 2018 confirms that, given the completion of mining in 2013 and the previous independent audit in 2015, no further independent audits are required unless otherwise directed by the Secretary (see **Appendix 7**).

## **11. INCIDENTS AND NON-COMPLIANCES DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD**

During the reporting period there were no:

- non-compliances;
- reportable incidents or exceedances; or
- official cautions, warning letters, penalty notices or prosecution proceedings.

## 12. ACTIVITIES TO BE COMPLETED IN THE NEXT REPORTING PERIOD

Activities planned to be completed during the next reporting period are outlined in Sections 4.3 and 8.3 and planned improvements in environmental management practices are outlined in Sections 6 and 7. **Table 12.1** presents a summary of the status of key actions identified by the Company in previous Annual Reviews. As discussed in Section 5, this includes the status from prior commitments made from the 2020/2021 Annual Review onwards. It should be noted that the actions that are marked as ‘complete’ will be removed following approval of the Annual Review from DPHI.

**Table 12.1**  
**Status of Key Actions**

Page 1 of 2

Reporting Period	Action	Status
20/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential commencement of rehabilitation works recommended under the <i>Donaldson Coal Mine Review of Mine Water Storage Quality</i> assessment (see MOP Attachment 2) and proposed as part of the <i>Abel Underground Mine and Donaldson Open Cut Mine – Closure Strategy for the West and Square Pits</i> (see MOP Attachment 1), including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) short-term stabilisation of water storages (e.g. gypsum treatment, removal or isolation of dispersive material, rock stabilisation of eroding drains and spillways);</li> <li>(b) water storage reshaping to enhance sediment capture capacity and planting of aquatic plants to enhance sediment filtering and reduce erosion; and</li> <li>(c) removal and/or lowering of the embankment and water storage area to convert the water storage area into a functional ephemeral wetland.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Commencement was delayed by weather conditions during the following reporting period.</p> <p>Superseded by <i>Sediment Dam Investigations Report</i> (SLR 2022)</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalisation of the <i>Sediment Dam Investigations</i> report by SLR (June 2022) and preparation of a program to implement recommended measures.</li> </ul>	Completed June 2022
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preparation of a <i>Rehabilitation Management Plan</i> in accordance with the Resources Regulator’s Operational Rehabilitation Reform and addressing matters raised by the Resources Regulator in their letter dated 18 December 2020.</li> </ul>	Completed August 2022
21/22 to 22/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preparation of a program to implement measures recommended in the <i>Sediment Dam Investigations Report</i> by SLR and potential commencement of works.</li> </ul>	Review of report to be undertaken with site inspection to assess current status / performance of key areas potentially requiring management.



**Table 12.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Status of Key Actions**

Page 2 of 2

Reporting Period	Action	Status
21/22 to 22/24 (Cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commencement of the rehabilitation materials balance report</li> </ul>	Report to be prepared following cessation of use by the Abel Underground Coal Mine and / or prior to final landform shaping
23/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult with RFS regarding backburn within <i>Tetratheca juncea</i> conservation area.</li> </ul>	Scheduled 2025
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Renewal of flagging for clumps of <i>Tetratheca juncea</i>.</li> </ul>	2025 (subject to backburning)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor and renewal of damaged nest boxes.</li> </ul>	Scheduled 2025

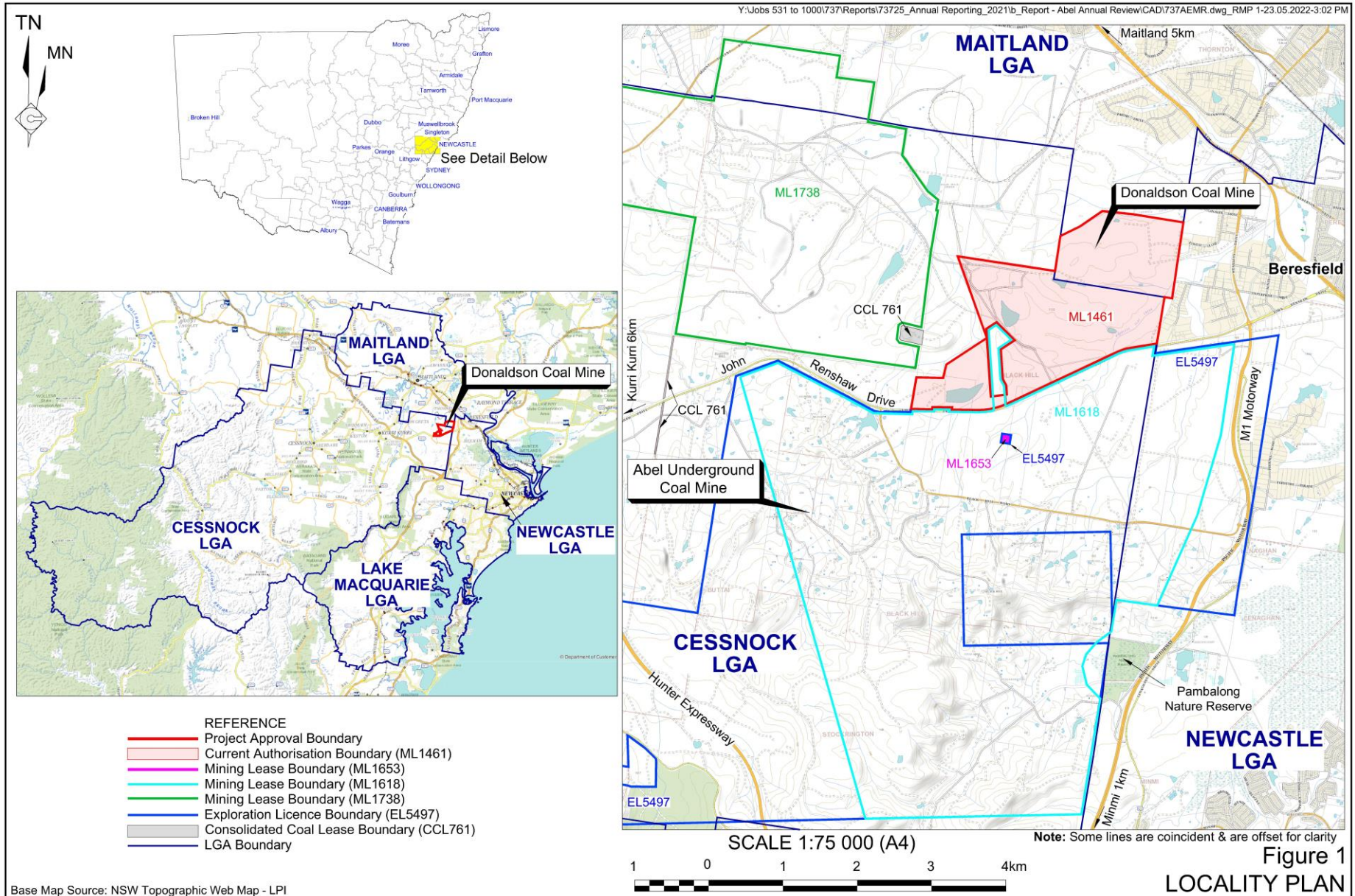
# Appendices

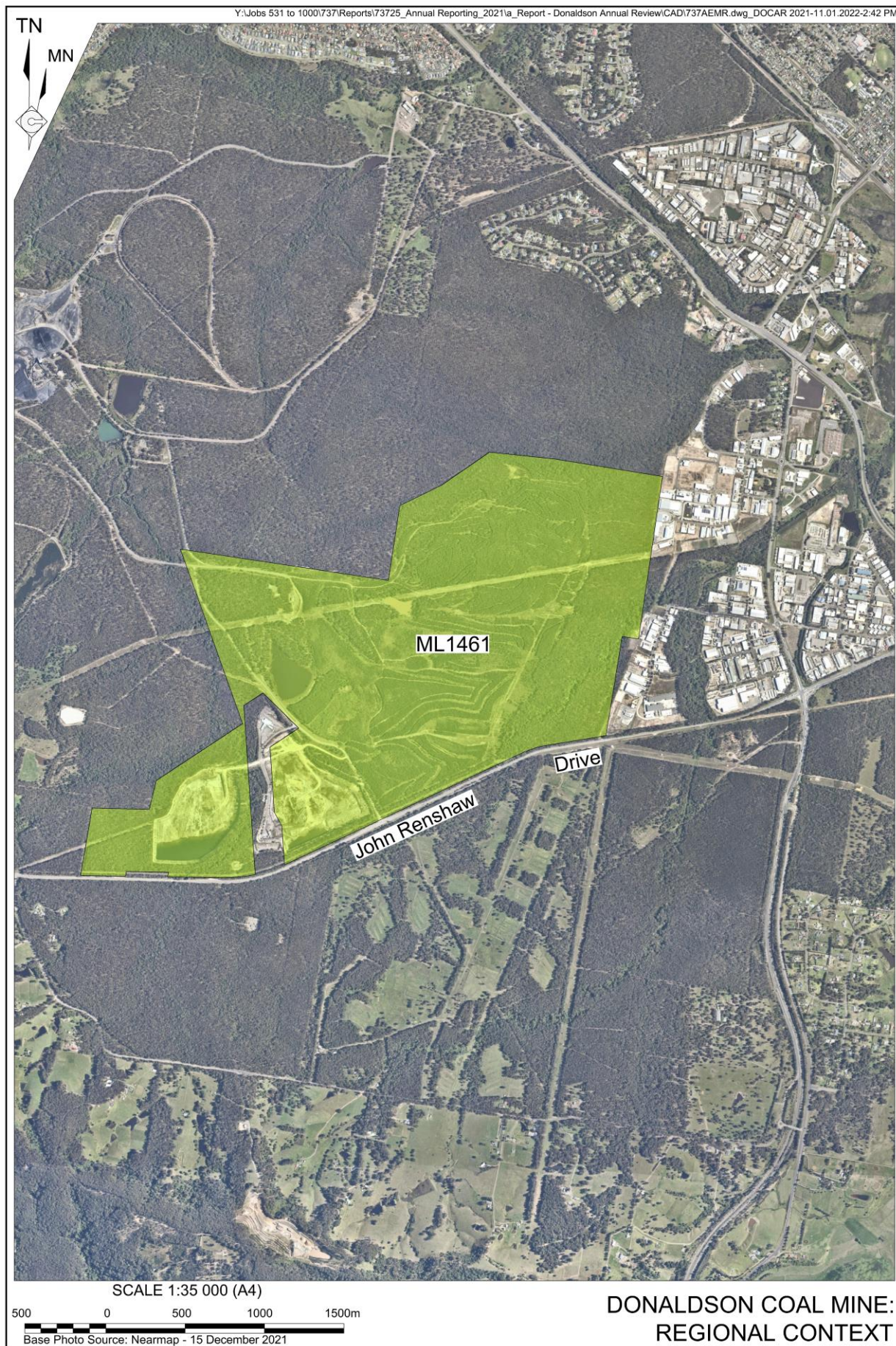
- Appendix 1 Site Locality Plan and Monitoring Locations
- Appendix 2 Description and Location of Known Aboriginal Sites
- Appendix 3 Compliance Review
- Appendix 4 2023 Annual Flora and Fauna Monitoring and 2024 Annual Winter Monitoring prepared by Wedgetail Project Consulting
- Appendix 5 Annual Survey of the *Tetratheca Juncea* Conservation Area 2023 prepared by Wedgetail Project Consulting
- Appendix 6 2023 Rehabilitation Monitoring prepared by Wedgetail Project Consulting
- Appendix 7 Approval to Cease Independent Environmental Audits

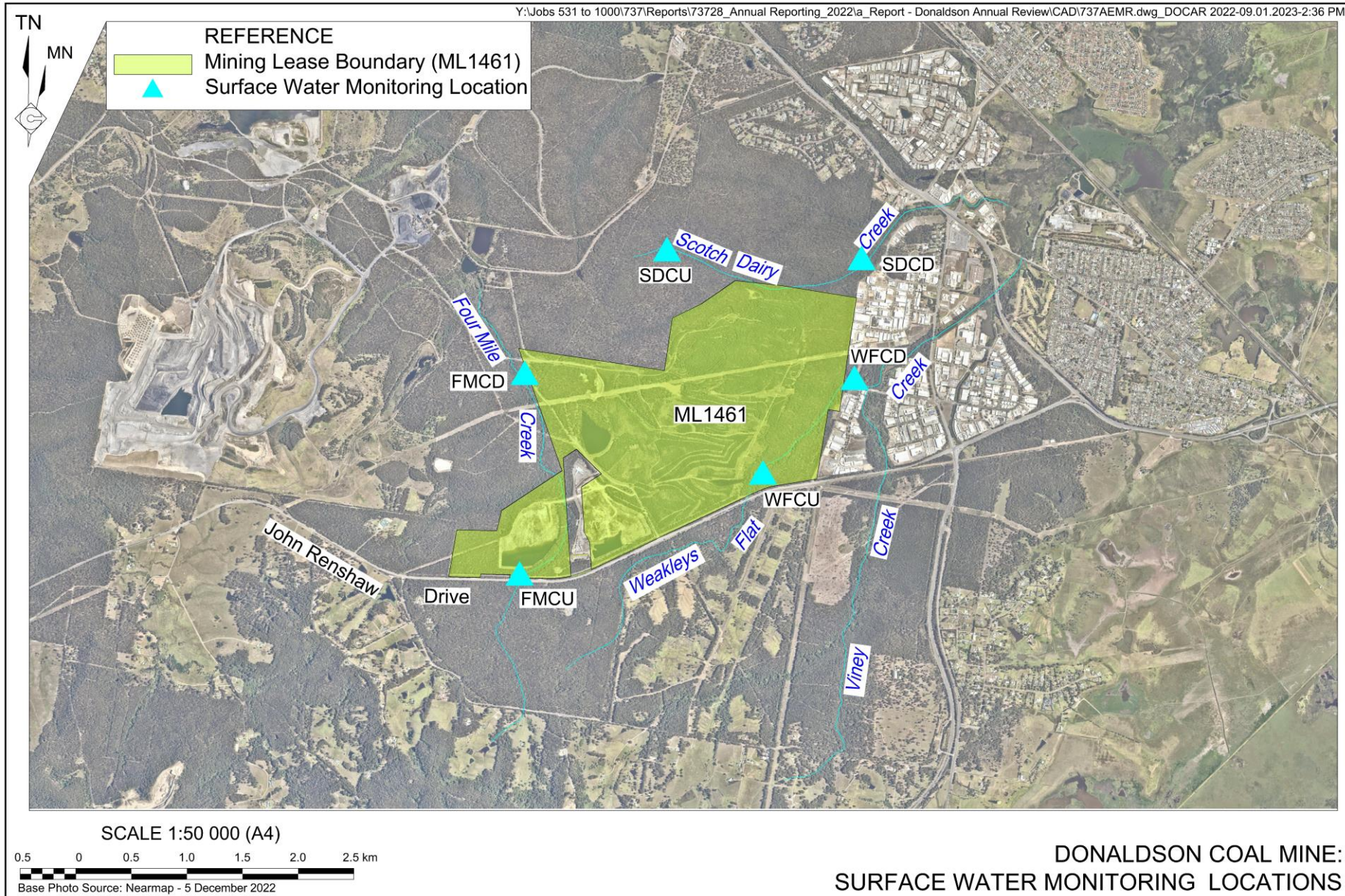
# Appendix 1

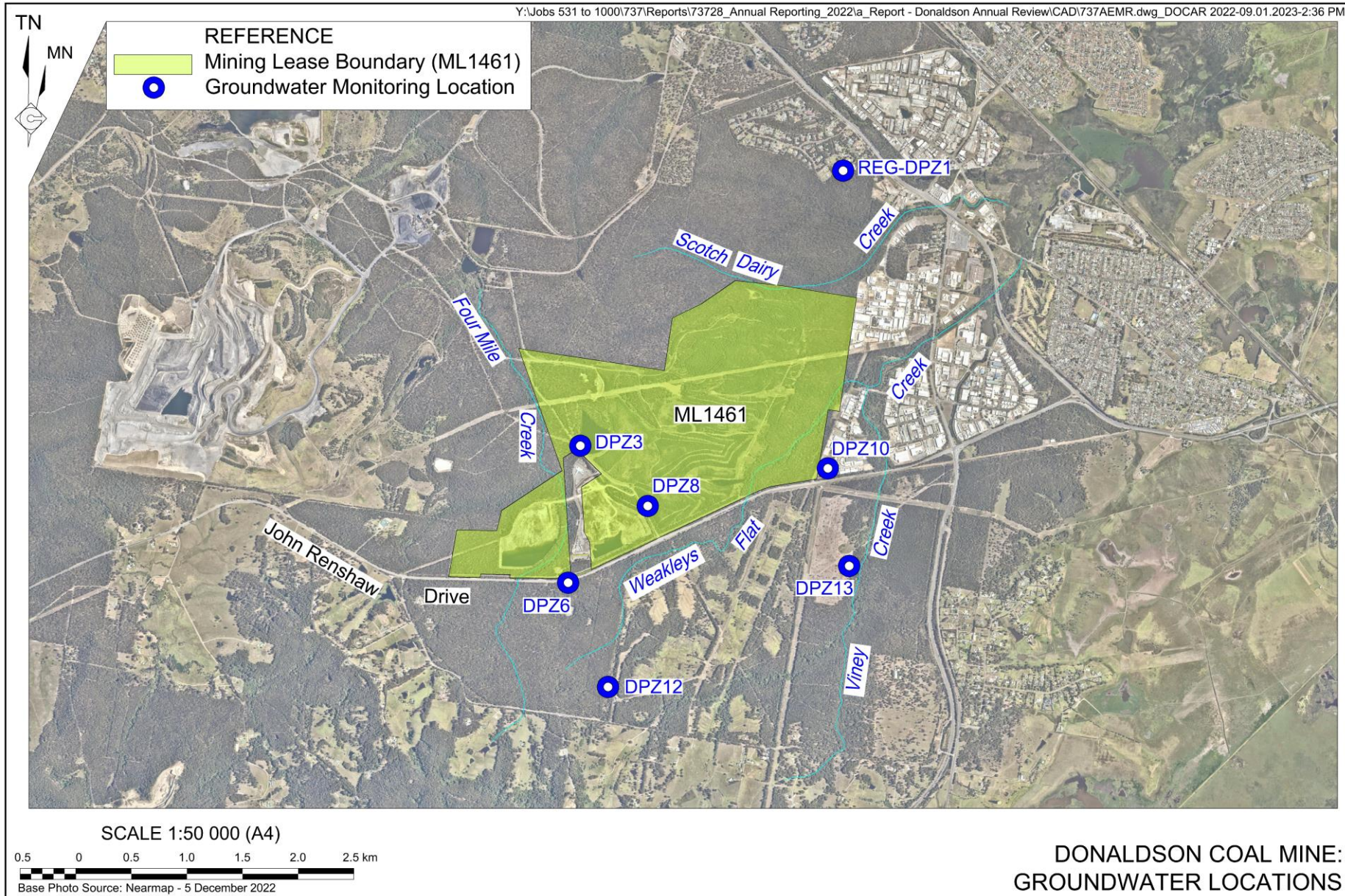
## Site Locality Plan and Monitoring Locations

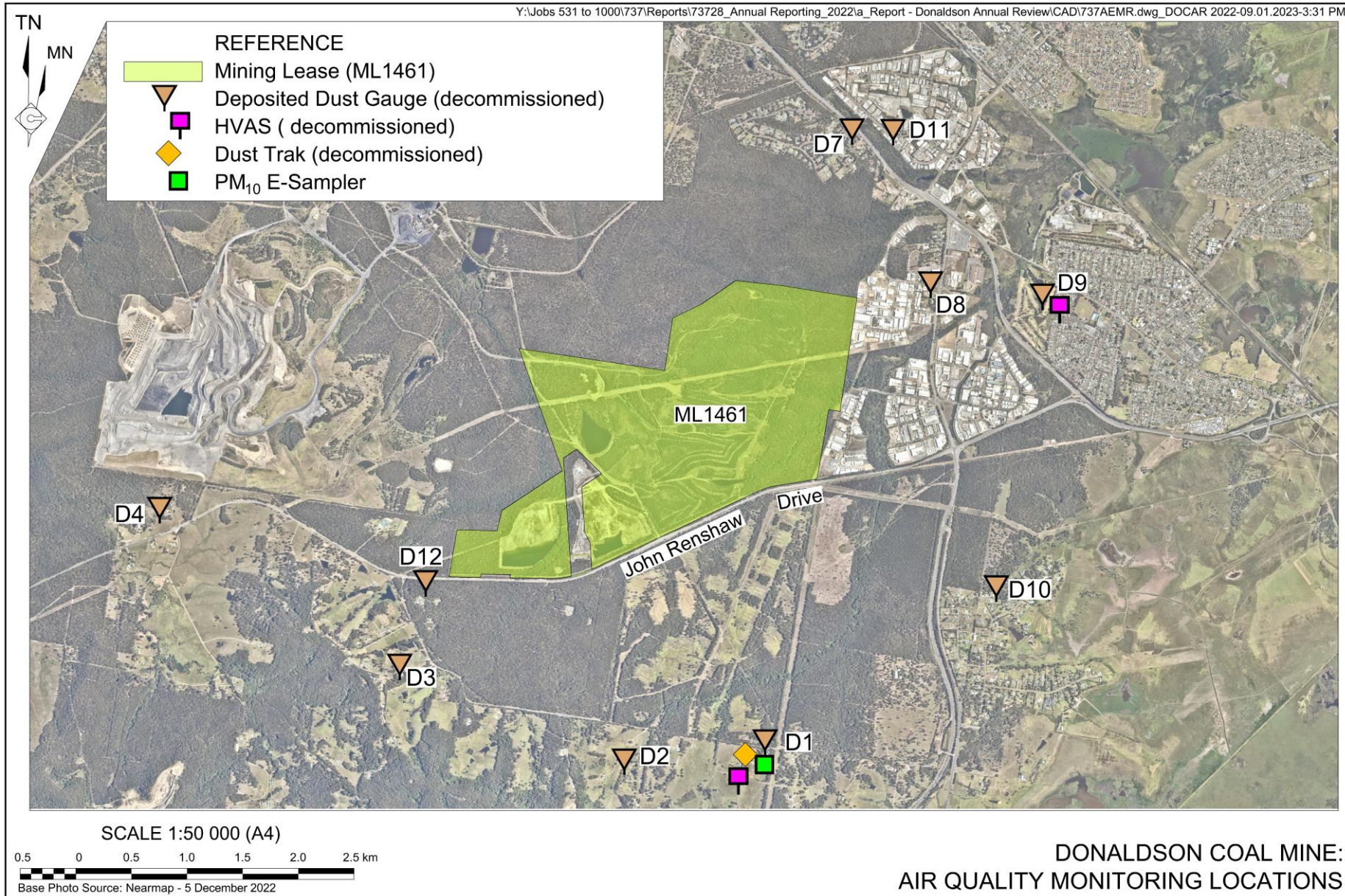
(Total No. of pages including blank pages = 6)













# Appendix 2

## Description and Location of Known Aboriginal Sites

(Total No. of pages including blank pages = 3)

Site Name	Recorder	Location	Description	Comments
<b>Bushland Conversation Area</b>				
FMC3	Effenberg (1997)	368300E 6368900N Bank of Four Mile Creek	Artefact scatter (5 artefacts), one axe grinding groove	
FMC4	Effenberg (1997)	368250E 6368650N Lower slope above Four Mile Creek	Artefact scatter (2 artefacts)	
FMC5	Effenberg (1997)	368500E 6368700N Lower slope above Four Mile Creek	Artefact scatter (2 artefacts)	
FMC6	Effenberg (1997)	368400E 6366100N Upper slope above Four Mile Creek	Artefact scatter (4 artefacts)	
FMC7	Effenberg (1997)	367600E 6366500N Crest between Four Mile Creek and a major tributary	Artefact scatter (3 artefacts)	
FMC8	Effenberg (1997)	367600E 6366850N Upper slope above tributary of Four Mile Creek	Scarred tree	
WFC1	Effenberg (1997)	371200E 6369200N Lower slope above Weakleys Flat Creek	Artefact scatter (3 artefacts)	
ISF3	Umwelt (1998)	368750E 6367650N Lower slope above Four Mile Creek	Isolated find	
ISF4	Umwelt (2001)	370550E 6368625N Mid slope above Weakleys Flat Creek	Isolated find	
Four Mile Creek 1 (38- 4-139)	Brayshaw (1985)	368130E 6367020N Bank of Four Mile Creek	Artefact scatter (19 artefacts)	
Four Mile Creek 2 (38- 4-140)	Brayshaw (1985)	367820E 6366880N Terrace of Four Mile Creek	Artefact scatter (10 artefacts)	
CA1	Umwelt (2001)	370658E 6368051N Mid slope, south of Weakleys Flat Creek	Isolated find	
CA2	Umwelt (2001)	371132E 6369039N Lower slope, north west of Weakleys Flat Creek	Artefact scatter (2 artefacts)	
CA3	Umwelt (2001)	370985E 6370511N Lower slope above a tributary of Scotch Dairy Creek	Isolated find	
CA4	Umwelt (2001)	369568E 6370040N Mid slope above Scotch Dairy Creek	Isolated find	
CA5	Umwelt (2001)	368391E 6366747N Mid slope, east of Four Mile Creek	Isolated find	
CA6	Umwelt (2001)	368229E 6366592N Lower slope above a tributary of Four Mile Creek	Isolated find	

Site Name	Recorder	Location	Description	Comments
CA7	Umwelt (2001)	367617E 6366456N Mid slope above Four Mile Creek	Isolated find	
CA8	Umwelt (2001)	370746E 6369747N Lower slope, south of Scotch Dairy Creek	Isolated find	
DMS2	Umwelt (2002)	370966E 6368184N Mid slope, south of Weakleys Flat Creek	Artefact scatter (2 artefacts)	
DMS4	Umwelt (2002)	368649E 6368181N Mid slope, east of Four Mile Creek	Isolated find	
DMS5	Umwelt (2002)	370665E 6368177N Mid slope, south of Weakleys Flat Creek	Isolated find	
DMS6	Umwelt (2002)	370809E 6369721N Mid slope, south of Scotch Dairy Creek	Scarred tree	
<b>Mine Impact Area</b>				
ISF1	(Effenberger 1997)	370500E 6369100N Lower slope above small tributary of Weakleys Flat Creek	Isolated find	Consent to Destroy granted (2002)
ISF2	(Effenberger 1997)	369800E 6368950N Lower slope above tributary of Weakleys Flat Creek	Isolated find	Consent to Destroy granted (2002)
ISF5	Umwelt (2001)	370275E 6368626N Mid slope above Weakleys Flat Creek	Isolated find	Application being prepared for consent to remove
ISF6	Umwelt (2001)	370305E 6368600N Mid slope above Weakleys Flat Creek	Isolated find	Application being prepared for consent to remove
Ironbark 2 (38-4-339)	Ruig (1993)	369190E 6367890N Upper slope above tributary of Weakleys Flat Creek	Isolated find	
DMS1	Umwelt (2002)	369734E 6369122N	Isolated find	Consent to Destroy granted (2002)
DMS3	Umwelt (2002)	369090E 6367962N Mid slope above Four Mile Creek	Isolated find	

# Appendix 3

## Compliance Review

(Total No. of pages including blank pages = 41)

**Table A3.1  
Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>OPERATION OF DEVELOPMENT</b>			
1	<p>(1) Applicant shall carry out the development generally in accordance with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development application DA 8/01173, dated 13 February 1998, lodged with Maitland City Council and DA 118/698/22 dated 19 February 1998, lodged with Cessnock City Council and the accompanying <i>Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)</i> dated 10 February 1998, and prepared by PPK Environment and Infrastructure, as modified by reports in Schedule 4;</li> <li>Submissions to the Commission of Inquiry by the applicant;</li> <li>Statement of Environmental Effects titled Modification to the approved mining area at the Donaldson Open Cut Cola Mine, Beresfield, dated 10 November 2004, and prepared by GSS Environmental;</li> <li>modification application DA 98/01173 &amp; DA 118/698/22 MOD 2 and supporting information, prepared by Donaldson Coal Pty Limited and dated 16 December 2010 and 25 March 2011; and</li> </ul> <p>Conditions of this consent.</p> <p>(2) If there is any inconsistency between the above, the most recent document shall prevail to the extent of the inconsistency. However, the conditions of this approval shall prevail to the extent of any inconsistency.</p> <p>(3) Unless otherwise specifically stated, the conditions of consent do not apply to lot 131 DP 234203 (owned by Steggles Limited at the date of this consent), provided the Deed of Agreement between Steggles Limited and the Applicant is in effect.</p>	YES	<p>The Donaldson Coal project has been developed generally in accordance with the specified documents, with the mine pits and rehabilitation conducted in accordance with the <i>Mining Operations Plan (Amendment)</i> approved by the Resources Regulator.</p>
2	<p>Except as expressly provided by the <i>Statement of Environmental Effects</i>, dated 10 November 2004, the development shall be restricted as follows:</p> <p>(i) the mine plan in the EIS shall be reduced such that no mining shall be undertaken in any area identified in accordance with these Conditions as a Conservation Area. This includes the Tetratheca Juncea Conservation Area (Condition 68); and</p> <p>(ii) the Applicant shall not clear any land or erect any structures within any Conservation Area without obtaining any further development approval from the Director-General.</p>	YES	<p>The mining area is delineated on the mine plans with the Conservation Area that surrounds the disturbed area of the mine managed for the protection of the vegetation and habitat value.</p> <p>The relocation of the 11kV power line required clearing a small area of the Bushland Conservation Area on the western end of the site and rehabilitation of the existing power line easement. The clearing and rehabilitation of these areas and the adjustment to the boundaries of the Bushland Conservation Area were approved by DoP in Nov 2006.</p> <p>It is noted that the illegal clearing within the BCA reported as an incident in 2022 was not undertaken by or authorised by the Company. Therefore compliance is considered to have been maintained.</p>

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes																												
<b>OPERATION OF DEVELOPMENT (Cont'd)</b>																															
3	(1) Subject to (2) the approved hours of operation are as follows: <table border="1" data-bbox="300 479 847 696"> <thead> <tr> <th>Works</th> <th>Period</th> <th>Hours</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Construction, including construction of any lands</td> <td>Monday to Friday</td> <td>7am to 6pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Saturday</td> <td>8 am to 1pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Mining operations, including mining, haulage of waste to dumps and coal processing</td> <td>Monday to Friday</td> <td>24 hours per day</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Saturday, Sunday</td> <td>7am to 6pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Road transportation and stockpiling of coal</td> <td>7 days per week</td> <td>24 hours per day</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rail loading of coal</td> <td>7 days per week</td> <td>7am to 10pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Maintenance of mobile and fixed plant</td> <td>7 days per week</td> <td>24 hours per day</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Blasting, not involving closure of John Renshaw Drive</td> <td>Monday to Saturday</td> <td>7am to 5pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Blasting, involving closure of John Renshaw Drive</td> <td>Monday to Saturday</td> <td>10am to 2pm</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <i>Table 1: Approved Hours of Operation</i> <i>Notes: Restrictions on Public Holidays are the same as Sundays.</i>	Works	Period	Hours	Construction, including construction of any lands	Monday to Friday	7am to 6pm	Saturday	8 am to 1pm	Mining operations, including mining, haulage of waste to dumps and coal processing	Monday to Friday	24 hours per day	Saturday, Sunday	7am to 6pm	Road transportation and stockpiling of coal	7 days per week	24 hours per day	Rail loading of coal	7 days per week	7am to 10pm	Maintenance of mobile and fixed plant	7 days per week	24 hours per day	Blasting, not involving closure of John Renshaw Drive	Monday to Saturday	7am to 5pm	Blasting, involving closure of John Renshaw Drive	Monday to Saturday	10am to 2pm	YES	No construction or mining activities occurred during the reporting period.
	Works	Period	Hours																												
Construction, including construction of any lands	Monday to Friday	7am to 6pm																													
	Saturday	8 am to 1pm																													
Mining operations, including mining, haulage of waste to dumps and coal processing	Monday to Friday	24 hours per day																													
	Saturday, Sunday	7am to 6pm																													
Road transportation and stockpiling of coal	7 days per week	24 hours per day																													
Rail loading of coal	7 days per week	7am to 10pm																													
Maintenance of mobile and fixed plant	7 days per week	24 hours per day																													
Blasting, not involving closure of John Renshaw Drive	Monday to Saturday	7am to 5pm																													
Blasting, involving closure of John Renshaw Drive	Monday to Saturday	10am to 2pm																													
(2) The Applicant shall submit a report to the Director-General's satisfaction demonstrating that the noise limits in Condition 15 can be met while rail loading of coal is occurring during the period from 6pm to 10pm. If that report does not demonstrate that the noise limits can be met to the Director-General's satisfaction, then the hours of operation for rail loading of coal shall be restricted to 7am to 6pm.	YES	Report previously submitted.																													
4	The Applicant shall comply with any order of the Director-General to cease activities causing serious or irreversible environmental concerns, until those concerns have been addressed to the satisfaction of the Director-General.	Not Activated	No order issued to date.																												
<b>COMMENCEMENT AND DURATION</b>																															
5	(1) To ensure the employment benefits of this development are realised without delay, the Applicant shall commence mining within two years of the date of this Consent. This does not remove the obligation of the Applicant to comply with any other requirement listed in the Conditions of this Consent. (2) To minimise potential delays to development on adjoining lands, consent for mining operations shall lapse on 31 December 2013. Note: Under this consent, the Applicant is required to rehabilitate the site and perform additional undertakings to the satisfaction of the Director-General and DRE. Consequently this approval will continue to apply in all other respects other than the right to conduct mining operations until the site has been properly rehabilitated.	YES	Mining commenced on 25 January 2001 (i.e. within 2 years of granting of the Consent) therefore this condition was complied with. Extension of time approved by Department of Planning.  The Donaldson Open Cut Coal Mine operations ceased in April 2013.																												
6	The Applicant shall notify the Director-General and the Councils in writing of the dates of commencement of: (i) construction works, (ii) mining, and (iii) coal processing operations, 14 days prior to the commencement of such works.	YES	Donaldson Coal provided written Notification to the Director-General and Councils prior to commencement of construction works, mining and coal processing operations.																												
7	No construction or mining shall commence until: (i) the relevant compliance reports in Condition 121 have been completed to the satisfaction of the Director-General; and (ii) the Applicant provides evidence to the Director-General of an agreement with the adjoining Bloomfield mine for the use of rail loading infrastructure.	YES	Compliance Reports for construction and mining were prepared and submitted to DUAP prior to commencement of the activities on the site in 2001.																												

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)  
Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Page 3 of 37

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER</b>			
8	The Applicant shall employ an Environmental Officer, whose qualifications are suitable to the Director-General, throughout the life of the mine. The Environmental Officer shall: (i) be responsible for the preparation of the <i>Environmental Management Strategy</i> (Conditions 10-13) and environmental management plans; (ii) be responsible for considering and advising on matters specified in the Conditions of this Consent and compliance with such matters; (iii) be responsible for receiving and responding to complaints in accordance with Condition 113; (iv) facilitate an induction and training program for all persons involved with construction activities, mining and environmental management activities; and (v) have the authority and independence to require reasonable steps to be taken to avoid or minimise unintended or adverse environmental impacts and failing the effectiveness of such steps, to stop work immediately if an adverse impact on the environment is likely to occur.	YES	Phillip Brown was employed as Environmental Manager in May 2003 and Planning NSW was notified on 7 April 2003 as required by MCoA 8.
9	The Applicant shall notify the Director-General, OEH, NOW, DRE, Councils and the Community Consultative Committee (Conditions 107-110) of the name and contact details of the Environmental Officer upon appointment and upon any changes to that appointment.	YES	The Director-General, EPA, DLWC, DMR, NPWS, Councils and the Community Consultative Committee were notified 30 May 2003 by letter of the appointment of Phillip Brown.
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGY</b>			
10	The Applicant shall prepare an <i>Environmental Management Strategy</i> (the Strategy) for the development, providing a strategic context for environmental management. All environmental management plans required by the Conditions of this Consent shall be consistent with the Strategy. The Strategy shall be prepared in consultation with the relevant authorities and the Community Consultative Committee and to the satisfaction of the Director-General, prior to commencement of construction.	YES	The <i>Environmental Management Strategy</i> was prepared in May 2000 for the Donaldson Mine for construction of the mine and mining operations.  Revision of the EMS occurred to integrate the requirements of the Donaldson Mine and the mining contractor to provide a single EMS for the project occurred in 2002.  Review and revision of the EMS has occurred as management plans for the Donaldson Coal operations are revised and an integrated <i>Environmental Management Strategy</i> to include the Tasman and Abel Coal projects was approved by DoP on 26 February 2008. The current version of the EMS was updated August 2018 and approved by DPE on 31 August 2018.
11	The Strategy shall cover the area of mining, the haul road and rail loading facility, and the Conservation Areas. The Strategy shall include: (i) statutory and other obligations which the Applicant is required to fulfil during construction and mining, including all approvals and consultations and agreements required from authorities and other stakeholders, and key legislation and policies;	YES	The <i>Environmental Management Strategy</i> prepared for the Abel and Donaldson Mine includes sections addressing each of the requirements of MCoA 11.

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGY (Cont'd)</b>			
11 Cont'd	(ii) definition of the role, responsibility, authority, accountability and reporting of personnel relevant to environmental management including the Environmental Officer; (iii) overall environmental management objectives and performance outcomes, during construction, mining and decommissioning of the mine for each of the key environmental elements for which management plans are required under this Consent; (iv) overall ecological and community objectives and a strategy for restoration and management including habitat areas, creeklines and drainage channels, within the context of those objectives; (v) identification of cumulative environmental impacts and procedures for dealing with these at each stage of the development; (vi) overall objectives and strategies for minimising the impacts of the development on economic productivity; (vii) steps to be taken to ensure that all approvals, plans, and procedures are being complied with; (viii) processes for conflict resolution in relation to the environmental management of the project; and (ix) documentation of the results of consultations undertaken in the development of the Strategy.		
12	The Applicant shall make copies of the <i>Environmental Management Strategy</i> available to Councils, OEH, NOW, DRE and the Community Consultative Committee within 14 days of approval by the Director-General.	YES	Copies of the <i>Environmental Management Strategy</i> and revisions prepared for Donaldson Coal projects have been made available.
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING AND REVIEWING</b>			
13	(1) Except as provided in (2), the Applicant shall provide six-monthly monitoring reports on all environmental monitoring required under this Consent for the first three years of the project and for any further period as may be determined necessary by the Director-General. The reports shall contain interpretations of the monitoring data, and summarise exceedances and action taken. The Applicant shall make copies of the monitoring reports available to the Director-General, NOW, OEH, DRE, Councils and the Community Consultative Committee. (2) Noise monitoring reports shall be provided six-monthly for the life of the mine, unless the Director-General, on the advice of the independent noise expert (Condition 48) requires more frequent reports.	YES	Monitoring Reports including all noise, blasting, air quality, surface and groundwater, indigenous heritage, flora and fauna, employment statistics, community consultation and complaints, were prepared six monthly and provided to the relevant authorities listed in MCoA 13 (1) between 2001 and 2004.  DIPNR approved the reporting of monitoring on an annual basis on 1 April 2004.  All monitoring data and reporting has occurred in the AEMR's / Annual Reviews since 2004.
14	All sampling strategies and protocols undertaken as part of any monitoring program shall include a quality assurance/quality control plan and shall require approval from the relevant regulatory agencies to ensure the effectiveness and quality of the monitoring program. Only accredited laboratories shall be used for laboratory analysis.	YES	Quality assurance/Quality Control information and data is included in the laboratory reports from the NATA registered laboratory, with the monitoring data.  All sampling and analysis has been conducted by NATA or AS/NZS ISO 17025 registered laboratories, as from 23 May 2002.



**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes																											
<b>NOISE AND VIBRATION</b>																														
<b>Noise Limits</b>																														
15	<p>Except as may be expressly provided by a OEH licence under the <i>Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997</i>, or unless subject to a negotiated agreement in accordance with Condition 23, the Applicant shall ensure that the noise emission from construction or mining operations, when measured or computed at the boundary of any dwelling not owned by the Applicant (or within 30 metres of the dwelling, if the boundary is more than 30 metres from the dwelling), shall not exceed the following limits:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="3">Location LA10(15 minute) noise limits (dB(A))</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>Daytime</th> <th>Night-time</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Beresfield (residential)</td> <td>45</td> <td>35</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Steggles Poultry Farm</td> <td>50</td> <td>40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ebenezer Park</td> <td>46</td> <td>41</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Black Hill Area</td> <td>40</td> <td>38</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Buchanan/Louth Pk</td> <td>38</td> <td>36</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ashtonfield Area</td> <td>41</td> <td>35</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Thornton Area</td> <td>48</td> <td>40</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Table 2: Noise Limits</i></p> <p><i>Note: Daytime is 7am to 10pm Monday – Saturday, and 8am to 10pm Sundays and Public Holidays. Night-time is 10pm to 7am Monday – Saturday, and 10pm to 8am Sundays and Public Holidays.</i></p> <p>The noise limits apply for prevailing meteorological conditions (winds up to 3 m/s), except under conditions of temperature inversions.</p>	Location LA10(15 minute) noise limits (dB(A))				Daytime	Night-time	Beresfield (residential)	45	35	Steggles Poultry Farm	50	40	Ebenezer Park	46	41	Black Hill Area	40	38	Buchanan/Louth Pk	38	36	Ashtonfield Area	41	35	Thornton Area	48	40	YES	Given that mining operations have ceased, no noise monitoring was undertaken during the reporting period. Previous Quarterly Noise Surveys generally identified that noise levels contributed by Donaldson Mine operations do not exceed noise emission goals for any of the periods. In the absence of operations, complaints and previous monitoring results, compliance is considered likely.
Location LA10(15 minute) noise limits (dB(A))																														
	Daytime	Night-time																												
Beresfield (residential)	45	35																												
Steggles Poultry Farm	50	40																												
Ebenezer Park	46	41																												
Black Hill Area	40	38																												
Buchanan/Louth Pk	38	36																												
Ashtonfield Area	41	35																												
Thornton Area	48	40																												
<b>Noise Management</b>																														
16	Prior to 31 October 2005, the Applicant shall prepare a Noise Monitoring Program for the development in consultation with OEH, and to the satisfaction of the Director-General, which includes a noise monitoring protocol for evaluating compliance with the criteria in condition 15.	YES	The <i>Mine Noise Monitoring Plan</i> was forwarded to DoP and DEC in Oct 2005 and a final revised copy submitted on 27 Dec 2005 for approval. The Plan was approved by DoP on 22 Jan 2007. An updated <i>Noise Management Plan</i> was approved by the (then) DPE in June 2019 and covers both the Abel and Donaldson mines.																											
17	Deleted in Notice of Modification 26 August 2005																													
18	Deleted in Notice of Modification 26 August 2005																													
19	Deleted in Notice of Modification 26 August 2005																													
20	In the event that a landowner or occupier considers that noise or vibration from the project at their property is in excess of the relevant criteria set out in this Consent, the Applicant shall, upon receipt of a written request and at its own expense immediately undertake direct discussion with the landowners or occupiers affected to determine their concerns. Independent investigations of the noise complaints shall be carried out if the matter is not resolved within six weeks, in accordance with Conditions 48-53	Not activated	No request for acquisition by any landowners due to noise or vibration impact had been initiated.																											

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes						
<b>Noise Acquisition</b>									
21	If noise monitoring or independent noise investigations indicate that noise from construction or operation of the mine at the boundary of a dwelling, or within 30 metres of the dwelling where the boundary is more than 30 metres from the dwelling, is in excess of the noise limits set out in this Consent under adverse weather conditions and if appropriate noise control measures cannot be achieved on the mine site, the landowner may request the Applicant in writing to acquire the whole of the property or such part of the property requested by the landowner where subdivision is approved.  Note: Adverse weather conditions means the presence of winds up to 3 metres per second, and/or temperature inversions of up to 4 degrees Celsius per 100 metres.	Not activated	As above.						
22	Any such request shall be referred to the Director-General for determination in consultation with the independent expert. If the Director-General determines acquisition is necessary, the Applicant shall acquire the property in accordance with Conditions 54-55.	Not activated	As above.						
<b>Negotiated Agreements</b>									
23	If monitoring or independent investigations indicate that noise or dust from the mine is in excess of the criteria set out in this Consent and the affected landowner does not wish to be acquired, the Applicant shall, if requested by the affected landowner, enter into a negotiated agreement. Where a negotiated agreement is required, the Applicant shall, within the time period specified by the Director-General: (i) appoint an independent facilitator, approved by the Director-General; (ii) negotiate a package of benefits for the landowner, which may include undertaking noise reduction measures on the property or at the dwelling(s) or compensation; (iii) pay all reasonable costs of the process; and (iv) report to the Director-General and the OEH on the agreement reached.	Not activated	No requirement has arisen for a negotiated agreement with any land owners.						
<b>BLASTING</b>									
<b>Blasting Criteria</b>									
24	The Applicant shall ensure that the airblast over pressure level from blasting at the development does not exceed the criteria in Table 3, and the ground vibration level does not exceed the criteria in Table 4, at any residence on privately-owned land or noise sensitive location as defined in the EPA's Industrial Noise Policy. <table border="1" data-bbox="300 1787 879 1957"> <tr> <td>Airblast overpressure (db(Lin Peak)</td> <td>Allowable exceedance</td> </tr> <tr> <td>115</td> <td>5% of total number of blasts in a 12 month period</td> </tr> <tr> <td>120</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> </table> <i>Table 3: Airblast Overpressure Impact Assessment Criteria</i>	Airblast overpressure (db(Lin Peak)	Allowable exceedance	115	5% of total number of blasts in a 12 month period	120	0%	YES	No blasting occurred during the reporting period.
Airblast overpressure (db(Lin Peak)	Allowable exceedance								
115	5% of total number of blasts in a 12 month period								
120	0%								

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Page 7 of 37

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>BLASTING (Cont'd)</b>			
<b>Blasting Criteria (Cont'd)</b>			
24 Cont'd	Peak Particle Velocity mm/s	Allowable exceedance	
	5	5% of total number of blasts in a 12 month period	
	10	0%	
<i>Table 4: Ground Vibration Impact Assessment Criteria</i>			
<b>Blasting Design and Management</b>			
25e	(1) The Applicant shall not blast within 500 metres of an occupied residence.	YES	No blasting occurred during the reporting period.
	(2) The Applicant shall not blast within 500 metres of private lands unless there is a written agreement between the Applicant and the landowner/occupier(s) to the satisfaction of the Director-General that guarantees the safety of persons who might use those lands.	YES	No blasting occurred during the reporting period.
	(3) The Applicant shall not blast within 500 metres of public lands unless public access to those areas is prevented at times of blasting.	YES	No blasting occurred during the reporting period.
	(4) The Applicant shall not blast within 500 metres of a public road unless the road is closed with the prior written agreement of the Regional Traffic Committee (or in the absence of the Regional Traffic Committee, the Director-General). A copy of any such agreement shall be supplied to the Director-General within 14 days of the agreement. If determined necessary by the Regional Traffic Committee, the Applicant shall prepare a Traffic Study to identify upgrading of the surrounding road system commensurate with the additional traffic volumes. The Study shall be prepared in consultation with Councils and the RTA, and to the satisfaction of the Regional Traffic Committee. All recommended traffic management measures and road infrastructure upgrading are to be undertaken at the Applicant's expense prior to any closure of John Renshaw Drive. If the study identifies the need for acquisition to enable the works to be undertaken, acquisition shall occur in accordance with the acquisition procedures established under this Consent.	YES	No blasting occurred during the reporting period.
	(5) The 500 metre distance may be reduced by the Director-General if a risk analysis undertaken by the Applicant to the Director-General's requirements indicates a lesser distance provides an appropriate level of safety.	Not activated	The 500m setback distance was not requested to be reduced.

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>BLASTING (Cont'd)</b>			
<b>Blasting Design and Management (Cont'd)</b>			
26	The Applicant shall prepare and implement a <i>Blast Management Plan</i> in consultation with DRE and Councils, prior to the commencement of blasting (including trial blasting). The Applicant shall make copies of the <i>Blast Management Plan</i> available to the independent noise expert (Condition 48), OEH, /DRE, Councils and the Community Consultative Committee within 14 days of approval by the Director-General.	YES	<i>Blast Management Plan</i> was developed for the Donaldson Mine in consultation with the DMR and Maitland City Council, Cessnock City Council, and Newcastle City Council, prior to the commencement of blasting at the Donaldson Mine and copies of the Plan were distributed to the relevant authorities and the CCC. The <i>Blast Management Plan</i> was revised in 2007 and approved by the (then) DoP.
27	The <i>Blast Management Plan</i> shall: (i) provide details of any proposed trial blasting;	YES	The <i>Blast Management Plan 2001</i> addresses Trial Blasting in Section 6.2.
	(ii) identify a monitoring program, including locations and justification for selection of locations such as the Steggles Black Hill poultry operations and areas of old underground mine workings;	YES	The <i>Blast Management Plan 2007</i> Section 6 addressed the Monitoring Program for the specified areas.
	(iii) detail measures to ensure that air blast overpressure and vibration monitoring and control is generally carried out in accordance with the recommendations of Australian Standard AS-2187-1993 (or its latest version) and in terms of ANZECC Guidelines;	YES	The <i>Blast Management Plan 2007</i> addresses Monitoring Procedures, in Section 4 and 6. The monthly <i>Blast Monitoring and Assessment Reports</i> by Hunter Acoustics addressed the quality control and monitored the data collection and recording.
	(iv) detail methods to measure weather data as soon as practicable prior to blasting and from that data predict whether noise levels are likely to be increased above the levels expected under prevailing meteorological conditions;	YES	The <i>Blast Management Plan 2007</i> addresses Meteorological Data Collection in Section 5.1.  The meteorological station located at the Donaldson Mine provides continuous records of the prevailing weather conditions and this data was available immediately prior to blasting.
	(v) detail measures to be taken to minimise disruptions from blasting, including any road closures agreed in accordance with Condition 25, and management of impacts on local traffic and pedestrian movements;	YES	The <i>Blast Management Plan 2007</i> addresses minimisation of disruptions caused by blasting in Section 5.2.
	(vi) specify procedures for ensuring that the occurrence of concurrent blasts with the adjoining coal mine operators is avoided; and	YES	The <i>Blast Management Plan 2007</i> addresses timing of blasts in Section 5.1.
	(vii) identify procedures for notifying landowners/occupiers within 2 km of the site of the general blasting program and for notifying landowners or occupiers within 500m of blasting events (or any reduced area approved by the Director-General under Condition 25(5)) prior to blasting occurring.	YES	The <i>Blast Management Plan 2007</i> addresses notification of blasting events to land owners in Section 5.3.
28	The Applicant shall not blast if weather conditions indicate that air blast overpressure levels are likely to be exceeded at residences not owned by the Applicant.	Not Applicable	No blasting occurred during the reporting period.

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Page 9 of 37

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
29	The Applicant shall report on blasting practices (including any trial blasting), weather data and the results of blast emissions monitoring in the six-monthly environmental monitoring reports and in the AEMR.	Not Applicable	No blasting occurred during the reporting period.
30	The Applicant shall revise the <i>Blast Management Plan</i> as necessary and provide an updated Plan five years after commencement of mining to the Director-General, the independent noise expert, OEH, DRE, Councils and the Community Consultative Committee.	YES	The <i>Blast Management Plan</i> was revised and submitted to the DoP on 16 July 2007. Approval from DoP was received on 17 July 2007.
<b>Blasting Impacts</b>			
31	Prior to the commencement of blasting, the Applicant shall undertake baseline structural surveys of all buildings and structures within 1.5 kilometres of blasting locations, unless it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Director-General in consultation with DRE that surveys of certain properties are unnecessary because blasting damage is unlikely to occur to those properties. In conducting these structural surveys, the Applicant shall ensure that: (i) the surveys are carried out by a technically qualified person, as agreed in consultation with the Director-General and relevant landowners; and (ii) a copy of any inspection report (including video or photographs, if requested), certified by the person who undertook the inspection, is supplied to the relevant property owner within 14 days of receipt of same.	YES	Two consultants - Burke Engineering Services and Geoff Craig & Associates, were offered to building owners for the structural survey reports in 2000.  All the required surveys of residences had been conducted when blasting commenced at the mine site, except for buildings on the Steggles property (as per a commercial agreement with Steggles). The survey of ABAKK House at the western end of the property was carried out later when the Donaldson Mine operations progressed to the west.  Donaldson Coal corresponded with ABAKK Pty Ltd in 2007 in relation to three dwellings and infrastructure that would be within 1 500m of the area of blasting at the Donaldson Mine and arranged for structural inspections.  A copy of the structural survey reports were provided to the property owners for each residence/structure.
32	In the event that a landowner or occupier considers that blast emissions from the development may have affected the material condition of their property, the landowner may make a written request to the Director-General for an independent dilapidation assessment. If the Director-General, in consultation with the DRE, is satisfied that an independent investigation is required, the Applicant shall ensure: (i) the survey is carried out by a technically qualified person, as agreed in consultation with the Director-General and the relevant landowners or occupiers; and (ii) a copy of any inspection report (including video or photographs, if requested), certified by the person who undertook the inspection, is supplied to the relevant property owner within 14 days of receipt of same.	Not activated	No requests for structural surveys have been received during this reporting period.
33	Where a dilapidation assessment concludes that structural damage has occurred as a result of blast emissions, the Applicant shall undertake immediate preventative and/or remedial measures at its expense.	YES	No dilapidation assessments have been requested during this reporting period.

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>Newcastle Herald's Printing Facilities at Holmwood Business Park</b>			
34	Prior to commencement of mining, the Applicant shall: (i) conduct ambient vibration monitoring adjacent to (on the floor) and if required, on the most vibration-sensitive component of the printing facilities in order to establish both the levels of ambient vibration generated by the operation of the Printing Facility itself and that of any other nearby vibration sources; (ii) provide a detailed report on the monitoring procedures and the monitoring results and findings to the Newcastle Herald upon completion of the survey; (iii) meet with Herald representatives to discuss the results of the survey and determine whether the initially agreed limit of 0.3 mm/s is appropriate; and (iv) design initial blasting for compliance with a peak particle velocity vibration criterion of 0.3 mm/s adjacent to or on the Printing Facility, unless a more appropriate limit is mutually agreed.	YES	Blast Vibration Assessment was conducted for the Newcastle Fairfax Printing facility in 2001. The report results established the ambient vibration levels at the site.  Discussions with Fairfax in 2001 resulted in an agreement that the vibration criteria be 3 mm/s ppv. Correspondence in relation to the 3mm/s ppv was received by Donaldson and DUAP advised of the change on 18 December 2001.
35	The Applicant shall monitor the impacts of blasting on the Printing Facility throughout the life of the mine, at a mutually agreed location in or adjacent to the Printing Facility during every blast. The Applicant shall provide results of the monitoring to the Newcastle Herald and provide a summary in the AEMR.	Not Applicable	No blasting occurred during the reporting period.
<b>Hunter Water Corporation Pipelines</b>			
36	The Applicant shall ensure that blasting is undertaken in a manner that protects the Hunter Water Corporation's pipeline to the satisfaction of the Hunter Water Corporation.	YES	Consultation with HWC resulted in agreement of a peak particle velocity of 100mm/sec at the pipeline.  Vibration monitoring has previously been conducted for each blast at monitors located along the pipeline corridor.  No blasting occurred during the reporting period.
<b>AIR QUALITY</b>			
<b>Air Quality Criteria</b>			
37	The Applicant shall take all practical steps to manage the mine's operations so that the ambient air quality goals for total suspended particles (TSP) of 90ug/m <sup>3</sup> (annual average) and the dust deposition goal of 4gm/m <sup>2</sup> (annual average) are not exceeded as a result of the development when monitored at any monitoring location specified in the <i>Air Quality Management Plan</i> .	YES	The air quality results reported for the Donaldson Mine are compliant with the criteria in MCoA 37.  The dust deposition criteria of 4gm/m <sup>2</sup> and the TSP goal of 90ug/m <sup>3</sup> have not been exceeded during this reporting period. The <i>Air Quality Management Plan</i> approved in 2019 no longer requires ongoing deposited dust or TSP monitoring.
<b>Air Quality Management</b>			
38	The Applicant shall prepare and implement an <i>Air Quality Management Plan</i> , containing strategies to manage the mine's contribution to dust deposition, TSP, PM10 and PM2.5 to the satisfaction of the Director-General, prior to the commencement of construction. The Applicant shall make copies of the <i>Air Quality Management Plan</i> available to the independent expert (Condition 48), OEHL, Councils and the Community Consultative Committee within 14 days of approval by the Director-General.	YES	The <i>Air Quality Management Plan</i> for the Donaldson Mine was finalised in November 2000 and presented to the CCC on 13 November 2000.

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Page 11 of 37

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>Air Quality Management (Cont'd)</b>			
38 Cont'd			The <i>Air Quality Management Plan</i> was reviewed in 2007 by Holmes Air Services and no revision was required. A revised plan was prepared 3 June 2019 for care and maintenance and approved by the (then) DPE 4 June 2019. A copy is provided on the Company website and the CCC was notified of the revised plan.
39	The <i>Air Quality Management Plan</i> shall: (i) identify potential sources of dust deposition, TSP and fine particulates (PM10 and PM2.5) and specify appropriate monitoring intervals and locations. The purpose of the monitoring is to evaluate, assess and report on these emissions and the ambient impacts with the objective of understanding the mine's contribution to levels of dust deposition, TSP and fine particulates in ambient air around the mine site;	YES	The 2019 <i>Air Quality Management Plan</i> addresses potential sources of dust emissions and presents an appropriate monitoring program in Section 8.  The monitoring program was implemented and the results are presented in Section 6 of the Annual Review.
	(ii) provide the mine's monitoring plan having regard to local meteorology and the relevant Australian Standards, identifying the methodologies to be used, including justification for monitoring intervals, weather conditions, seasonal variations, selecting locations, periods and times of measurements;	YES	The 2019 <i>Air Quality Management Plan</i> addresses the monitoring plan in Section 8.
	(iii) provide the design of any modelling or other studies, including the means for determining the contribution to dust deposition, TSP and fine particulates from the development;	YES	The 2019 <i>Air Quality Management Plan</i> addresses modelling and other studies in Section 10.
	(iv) provide details of dust suppression measures for all sources of dust from the development (including the haul road and the rail loading site);	YES	The 2019 <i>Air Quality Management Plan</i> addresses dust suppression measures in Section 7.2.
	(v) provide details of actions to ameliorate impacts if they exceed the relevant criteria; and	YES	The 2019 <i>Air Quality Management Plan</i> addresses amelioration and mitigation measures for dust control in Section 10.3.
	(vi) provide the design of the reactive management system intended to reduce the day-to-day impacts of dust and fine particulates due to the mine's operation.	YES	The 2019 <i>Air Quality Management Plan</i> addresses dust management procedures in Sections 7.2 and 10.3.
40	The Applicant shall ensure the prompt and effective rehabilitation of all disturbed areas as soon as practicable to minimise the generation of dust.	YES	Rehabilitation progressively occurred on disturbed land at the Donaldson Mine overburden and backfill areas to minimise generation of wind blown dust, with revegetation established using local indigenous species.

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>Air Quality Management (Cont'd)</b>			
41	The Applicant shall cease offending work at such times when the hourly average wind speed exceeds 5 metres per second and the operations are resulting in visible dust emissions blowing in a direction so as to cross onto public roads or lands not owned by the Applicant.	YES	The meteorological station installed at the Donaldson Mine site (and relocated to the Abel mine area in 2017) provides continuous reading of wind speed. Results are available instantly on computer. Wind speed above 5 m/s triggers a response to stop work at the mine site until wind conditions return to below 5 metres/sec. No earthmoving activities occurred during the reporting period.
42	The Applicant shall revise the <i>Air Quality Management Plan</i> as necessary and provide an updated Plan five years after commencement of mining and to the Director-General, independent air quality expert (Condition 48), OEH, Councils and the Community Consultative Committee.	YES	The <i>Air Quality Management Plan</i> and monitoring program was reviewed by Holmes Air Services in 2007 and it was concluded that the plan was adequate and did not require to be updated. A further review was undertaken in 2019 and the plan updated to reflect care and maintenance.
<b>Air Quality Monitoring</b>			
43	The Applicant shall install, maintain and continuously operate a meteorological station in accordance with the relevant Australian Standards and to the satisfaction of the OEH. The meteorological station shall be installed within six weeks of the date of this consent and remain for the life of the mine. The Applicant shall analyse and report the meteorological data on a monthly basis to adequately characterise the site, and shall use the data collected by the wind monitoring and recording station to determine when and how the mine operation is to be modified in accordance with the <i>Air Quality Management Plan</i> and the Conditions of this Consent.	YES	A meteorological station installed at the Donaldson Mine site since December 2000 and was relocated to the Abel mine area in 2017.  Meteorological data is collected continuously and analysed monthly.
44	The Applicant shall install, maintain and operate dust deposition gauges in accordance with the relevant Australian Standards and to the satisfaction of the OEH. The dust deposition gauges shall be installed and operational within six weeks of the date of this consent and the Applicant shall determine the dust deposition rate in grams/m2/month in each calendar month so that any increases in dust deposition rates can be presented in the AEMR.	YES	Nine (9) dust deposition gauges were previously installed on the Donaldson Mine site, in accordance with Australian Standards.  Approval from the (then) DPE was granted on 4 June 2019 for the decommissioning of deposited dust monitoring in accordance with the revised <i>Air Quality Management Plan</i> (2019). EPL 11080 has now also been surrendered and monitoring requirements of the combined EPL 12856 reflect updated air quality monitoring requirements.



**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>Air Quality Monitoring (Cont'd)</b>			
45	<p>(1) The Applicant shall install, maintain and operate an air quality monitoring network in accordance with the relevant Australian Standards and to the satisfaction of the OEH. The network shall be installed and operational within six weeks of the date of this consent and in each calendar year the Applicant shall determine the concentrations of TSP in g/m<sup>3</sup> (annual average) and fine particulates (PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>) in g/m<sup>3</sup> (24 hour average and annual average) so that the contribution of the mine to regional ambient air quality can be presented in the AEMR.</p> <p>(2) The Applicant shall also participate in (and if appropriate contribute reasonable funds to) regional air quality studies conducted by or on behalf of the OEH or the Director-General.</p>	YES	<p>See MCoA 44 above.</p> <p>All air quality meteorological data is stored on the air quality database at the Donaldson Mine site.</p> <p>High Volume Air Samplers (HVAS) were previously installed at Barter Enterprise site and Beresford Golf Course for collection of TSP and PM<sub>10</sub>. The revised <i>Air Quality Management Plan</i>, approved by the (then) DPE on 4 June 2019, replaces the previously installed HVAS and Dustrak monitors with a PM<sub>10</sub> E-Sampler. Only continuous data from the E-Sampler will be collected and reported in future Annual Reviews.</p> <p>No approach has been made to Donaldson Mine in relation to regional air quality studies during this reporting period.</p>
<b>Air Quality Acquisition</b>			
46	If dust monitoring or independent dust investigations indicate that dust from operation of the mine at a dwelling is in excess of the criteria set out in this Consent and if appropriate dust control measures cannot be achieved on the mine site, the landowner may request the Applicant in writing to acquire the whole of the property or such part of the property requested by the landowner where subdivision is approved.	Not activated.	No such requests received.
47	Any such request shall be referred to the Director-General for determination. If the Director-General determines acquisition is necessary, the Applicant shall acquire the property in accordance with Conditions 54-55.	Not activated.	No such requests received.
<b>INDEPENDENT MONITORING OF NOISE, VIBRATION OR DUST</b>			
48	<p>The Applicant shall bear the reasonable costs of the appointment by the Director-General of an independent noise and air quality expert(s) and/or mediator to assist in the implementation of the Conditions of this Consent. The independent expert(s) shall:</p> <p>(i) receive and advise the Director-General on the Noise, Blast and Air Quality Management Plans;</p> <p>(ii) receive and advise the Director-General on noise and dust monitoring results;</p> <p>(iii) be responsible for, or supervise, the independent investigation of complaints; and</p> <p>(iv) advise the Director-General on the need for acquisition due to noise, vibration or dust.</p> <p>The independent expert(s) shall report directly to the Director-General and provide such advice as agreed by the Director-General to the Applicant and the landowner or occupier.</p>	Not activated	No independent experts have been required to be appointed.

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>INDEPENDENT MONITORING OF NOISE, VIBRATION OR DUST (Cont'd)</b>			
49	In the event that a landowner or occupier considers that noise, vibration and/or dust from the project at their property is in excess of the relevant criteria set out in this Consent the landowner may make a written request to the Applicant for an investigation. If the Director-General, on the advice of the independent expert, is satisfied that an investigation is required, the independent expert shall ensure that: (i) direct discussions are undertaken with the landowners or occupiers affected to determine their concerns and to plan and implement an investigation to quantify the impact and determine the sources of the effect; (ii) independent investigations are conducted to quantify the impact and determine the source of the effect; and (iii) a report is submitted to the Director-General, the Applicant and the landowner or occupier.	Not activated	No such requests received.
50	If exceedances are identified, within six weeks or as otherwise directed by the Director-General, the Applicant shall modify the mining activity which may be causing the impacts and/or enter into a negotiated agreement (Condition 23) with the affected landowner.	Not activated	As above.
51	The Applicant shall bear the cost of the independent investigations and make available plans, programs and other information necessary for the independent expert(s) to form an appreciation of the past, present and future works and their effects on noise, vibration and/or dust emissions.	Not activated	As above.
52	Investigations shall be carried out in accordance with a documented Plan. The Plan shall be designed and implemented to measure and/or compute (with appropriate calibration by measurement) the relevant noise, vibration and/or dust levels at the complainant's residence/property boundary emitted by the development.	Not activated	As above.
53	Further independent investigations shall cease if the Director-General, in consultation with the independent expert, is satisfied that the relevant approval levels are not being exceeded and are unlikely to be exceeded in the future.	Not activated	As above.
<b>ACQUISITION PROCEDURE</b>			
54	Upon determination of the Director-General in relation to the purchase of a property in accordance with any Conditions of this Consent, the Applicant shall negotiate and purchase the whole of the property (unless the request specifically requests acquisition of only part of the property and subdivision has already been approved) within six months of receipt of notification from the Director-General. The Applicant shall pay the landowners an acquisition price resulting from proper consideration of: (i) a sum not less than the current market value of the owner's interest in the land, whosoever is the occupier, having regard to:	Not activated	As above.

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Page 15 of 37

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>ACQUISITION PROCEDURE (Cont'd)</b>			
54 Cont'd	(a) the existing use and permissible use of the land in accordance with the applicable planning instruments at the date of the written request; (b) the presence of improvements on the land and/or any Council approved building or structure which although substantially commenced at the date of the request is completed subsequent to that date; and (c) as if the land was unaffected by the development proposal. (ii) the owner's reasonable compensation for disturbance allowance and relocation within the Lower Hunter Region; (iii) the owner's reasonable costs for obtaining legal advice and expert witnesses for the purposes of determining the acquisition price for the land and the terms upon which it is to be acquired; and (iv) the purchase price determined by reference to points (i), (ii) and (iii) shall be reduced by the amount of any compensation awarded to a landowner pursuant to the <i>Mining Act, 1992</i> or other legislation providing for compensation in relation to coal mining but limited to compensation for dwellings, structures and other fixed improvements on the land, unless otherwise determined by the Director-General in consultation with the DRE.		
55	Notwithstanding any other Condition of this Consent, the Applicant may, upon request of the landowner, acquire any property affected by the project during the course of this Consent on terms agreed to between the Applicant and the landowner.	Not activated	As above.
<b>INDEPENDENT VALUATION</b>			
56	In the event that the Applicant and the landowner cannot agree within three months upon the acquisition price of the land and/or the terms upon which it is to be acquired under the terms of this Consent, then either party may refer the matter to the Director-General who shall request an independent valuation to determine the acquisition price. The independent valuer shall consider any submissions from the landowner and the Applicant in determining the acquisition price.	Not activated	As above.
57	If the independent valuer requires guidance on any contentious legal, planning or other issues, the independent valuer shall refer the matter to the Director-General, who, if satisfied that there is a need for a qualified panel, shall arrange for the constitution of the panel. The panel shall consist of: (i) the appointed independent valuer; (ii) the Director-General; and/or (iii) the President of the Law Society of NSW or nominee. The qualified panel shall, on the advice of the valuer, determine the issue referred to it and advise the valuer.	Not activated	As above.
58	The Applicant shall bear the costs of any independent valuation or survey assessment requested by the Director-General.	Not activated	As above.

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>INDEPENDENT VALUATION (Cont'd)</b>			
59	The Applicant shall, within 14 days of receipt of a valuation by the independent valuer, offer in writing to acquire the relevant land at a price not less than the said valuation.	Not activated	As above.
<b>WATER</b>			
<b>Water Management</b>			
60	The Applicant shall prepare and implement a <i>Water Management Plan</i> in consultation with NOW, Councils, OEHL and the Hunter Catchment Management Trust, and to the satisfaction of the Director-General, prior to the commencement of construction. The Applicant shall make copies of the <i>Water Management Plan</i> available to the OEHL, NOW, DRE, Councils, the Hunter Catchment Management Trust and the Community Consultative Committee within 14 days of approval by the Director-General.	YES	The <i>Water Management Plan 2000</i> was developed in consultation with the EPA, DLWC, Councils, Hunter Catchment Management Trust and to the satisfaction of the Director-General, prior to the commencement of construction.  The <i>Water Management Plan</i> was reviewed in 2005 and a revision of the Plan occurred in 2008. The <i>Water Management plan</i> was again revised in 2019.
61	The <i>Water Management Plan</i> shall include but not be limited to: (i) management of the impacts of the development on the quality and quantity of surface and groundwater, including water in dirty water dams and clean water diversion dams; (ii) stormwater and general surface runoff diversion to ensure separate effective management of clean and dirty water; (iii) stormwater management facilities designed to at least a 1:10 year storm design criteria; (iv) identification of any possible adverse effects on water supply sources (both surface and groundwater) of landowners or occupiers from the development, and implementation of mitigation measures as necessary; (v) identification of the fresh quality groundwater zones within the DA area and appropriate protection strategies; (vi) management of the impacts of the development on the quality and quantity of groundwater within 2 kilometres of the boundary of the DA area, with particular attention to mobilisation of salts and contingency plans for managing any adverse impacts; (vii) management of the impacts of the development on the quality and quantity of surface water discharged, including scheduling of mining operations to minimise the area excised from the catchment draining to Woodberry Swamp at any one time; (viii) identification of a defined buffer zone between the mine pit and Four Mile Creek and measures to minimise the risk of blast-induced fractures in the buffer zone to prevent saline seepage from the rehabilitated landform toward Four Mile Creek in the post-mining period;	YES	(i) The <i>Water Management Plan</i> addresses the management of impacts of the development on the quality and quantity of surface and ground water in Sections 3 and 5. (ii) The <i>Water Management Plan</i> addresses the management of impacts of the development on the quality and quantity of surface and ground water in Sections 3, 4 and 5. (iii) The <i>Water Management Plan</i> addresses the stormwater management issues, in Sections 3 and 5. (iv) The <i>Water Management Plan</i> addresses possible adverse effects of the development on water supply sources, in Sections 3 and 5. (v) The <i>Water Management Plan</i> addresses the quality of groundwater zones within the DA area, in Sections 4 and 5. (vi) The <i>Water Management Plan</i> addresses the management of impacts on the quality and quantity of groundwater within 2km of the DA area, in Sections 4 and 5. (vii) The <i>Water Management Plan</i> addresses the management of impacts on the quality and quantity of surface water discharged from the Donaldson Mine site, in Sections 3 and 5. (viii) The <i>Water Management Plan</i> addresses the buffer zone and protection Four Mile Creek in Sections 3 and 5.

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Page 17 of 37

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>Water Management (Cont'd)</b>			
61 Cont'd	(ix) procedures for the maintenance of drainage systems and water management structures; and	YES	(ix) The <i>Water Management Plan</i> addresses the procedures for maintenance of drainage systems and water management structures in Sections 3 and 5.
	(x) development of a strategy for the decommissioning of water management structures, including dirty water dams and clean water diversion dams, and long term management of the final void.		(x) The <i>Water Management Plan</i> addresses the strategy for decommissioning of the water management structures in Sections 3, 4 and 5.
62	The Applicant shall revise the <i>Water Management Plan</i> as necessary and provide an updated Plan five years after commencement of mining to the Director-General, OEH, NOW, DRE, Councils, the Hunter Catchment Management Trust and the Community Consultative Committee.	YES	The <i>Water Management Plan</i> was reviewed in 2005 and Tasman Mine requirements included. The Plan was further revised in 2008 to include the Abel Mine water management and again revised in 2019 to cover the care and maintenance period for the Abel Underground Mine.
<b>Water Monitoring</b>			
63	The Applicant shall prepare and implement a detailed monitoring program for groundwater and surface water in consultation with DP&I, OEH, DRE, and the Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority, throughout the life of the mine and for a period of at least 5 years after the completion of mining, or other such period as determined by the D_G. The results of the monitoring shall be included in the AEMR (Conditions 114-116). The monitoring program shall contain: (i) details of proposed monitoring sites, frequency and parameters to be tested; (ii) pre-mining baseline data;	YES	(i) <i>Water Management Plan</i> section 3.6 and 4.2. (ii) <i>Water Management Plan</i> section 3.6 and 4.1. (iii) <i>Water Management Plan</i> section 3.6. (iv) Biological monitoring in the three creeks using SIGNAL and AUSRIVAS assessment criteria was undertaken between 2000 and 2019. Biological monitoring ceased in 2019 in accordance with the revised <i>Water Management Plan</i> (2019). (v) Macro-invertebrate surveys included bank and bed stability. (vi) Continuous metering of water transfer volumes between the Donaldson and Bloomfield operations occurs.
	(iii) monitoring of surface water quality to detect any changes in ambient water quality between the mine site and the wetlands; (iv) monitoring of macroinvertebrates and vegetation in accordance with the protocols developed by the Hunter SIGNAL biological assessment criteria, with an assessment of inflows to the wetlands; (v) monitoring of stream bank and bed stability; (vi) monitoring of the volume and quality of water transfer between the Donaldson and Bloomfield operations; and (vii) a program for replacement of any monitoring bores destroyed by the development.		(vii) Whilst four (4) monitoring bores were previously destroyed as part of the mining operations, a review of the groundwater monitoring network by Dundon Consulting Pty Ltd concluded that the existing network is adequate with no changes considered necessary. It is noted that the mine has ceased operations for ~10years – as such, the requirements of this condition have been met and are no longer applicable.
64	Prior to 31 October 2005, the Applicant shall revise, and then implement any necessary changes in the monitoring program for groundwater and surface water to the satisfaction of the Director-General.	YES	The <i>Water Management Plan</i> was revised in 2005 under the Notification of Modification condition with comments received from DLWC and DoP and response from Peter Dundon & Associates.

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>Water Supply</b>			
65	On request of a landowner whose water supply from licensed bore holes or springs has been determined by NOW at any time to have been affected by the project, the Applicant shall replace lost water supply with water of an equivalent quality and quantity to meet the landowner's requirements, to the satisfaction of NOW.	Not activated	No such request received.
<b>EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL</b>			
66	The Applicant shall prepare and implement an <i>Erosion &amp; Sediment Control Plan</i> for the development (including the haul road and the relocation of utilities and services) to the satisfaction of NOW and submit the Plan to the OEH as part of applications for a licence under the Protection of the <i>Environment Operations Act</i> . The Plan shall be prepared prior to the commencement of work in the relevant areas. The Applicant shall make copies of all Erosion & Sediment Control Plan(s) available to Director-General, Councils and the Community Consultative Committee within 14 days of approval.	YES	<i>Erosion and Sediment Control Plan</i> was submitted to the EPA on 4 May 2000 as part of the application for Environment Protection Licence No. 11080.  A review of the <i>Erosion and Sediment Control Management Plan</i> was conducted in 2005 following the DPI-MR inspection in May 2005, and the Plan revised.
67	The Erosion and Sediment Control Plan(s) shall include consideration and management of erosion and sedimentation of watercourses and water bodies, including Woodberry Swamp.	YES	The <i>Erosion and Sediment Control Plan</i> addresses the management of erosion and sedimentation of watercourses and water-bodies on the Donaldson Mine site, in Sections 4.  Control of erosion and monitoring of water quality of watercourses and water bodies on the mine site and to the boundaries of the Donaldson property, results in management of impact from the mine on downstream habitats (e.g. Woodberry Swamp).  Monitoring also previously included assessment of bank and bed stability as part of the macroinvertebrate survey reports.
<b>FLORA AND FAUNA</b>			
<b>Tetratheca Juncea Conservation Area</b>			
68	Prior to the commencement of construction, the Applicant shall: (i) undertake a survey of potential <i>Tetratheca Juncea</i> habitat in the southwest portion of the site. The survey shall: (a) be undertaken by a suitably qualified botanist, with the assistance of a suitably qualified surveyor, both approved by the Director-General; (b) re-examine the outcomes of previous surveys; (c) be undertaken between the months of August and December (inclusive); (d) record the location of <i>Tetratheca Juncea</i> clumps on the ground using suitable tags and by using either theodolite and electronic measuring equipment or differential GPS;	YES	(i) Figures 1 and 4 of the <i>Tetratheca Juncea Management Plan</i> show the Southwest Conservation Area. (a) a T. Juncea survey of the Conservation Area was undertaken by Gunninah Environmental Consultants and the aerial survey of the area was conducted by a qualified surveyor. (b) The results of previous T. Juncea surveys were assessed and collated with the current data for the preparation of the maps and T. Juncea Management Plan. (d) T. Juncea clumps have been located using GPS and surveyed onto the site maps in the T. Juncea Management Plan.

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Page 19 of 37

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>FLORA AND FAUNA (Cont'd)</b>			
<b>Tetratheca Juncea Conservation Area (Cont'd)</b>			
68 Cont'd	(e) investigate the occurrence of any native sonicating bee habitat within 500 metres of the Tetratheca Juncea population; and  (ii) establish a Conservation Area for the Tetratheca Juncea based on the findings of the survey. The Conservation Area shall include a 50 metre buffer. The boundaries of the Conservation Area shall be surveyed and marked by a suitably qualified surveyor, with the assistance of a botanist, using either a theodolite and electronic measuring equipment or differential GPS. No clearing, construction or mining shall commence until the boundary of the Conservation Area has been approved by the Director-General.	YES	e) Bee habitat is discussed in Section 5.2.2 of the T. Juncea Management Plan.  (ii) The southwest Conservation Area has been established with a 50 metre buffer to the closest area that may become part of the mine operations (see Figure 1 from the <i>Flora and Fauna Management Plan</i> ). The area is pegged but not fenced.
69	The Applicant shall prepare a Management Plan for the Tetratheca Juncea Conservation Area in consultation with OEH and to the satisfaction of the Director-General, prior to commencement of construction. The Plan shall be consistent with the <i>Flora and Fauna Management Plan</i> (Conditions 76-79); and include measures for fire management. The Applicant shall clearly mark the boundary of the Conservation Area and make provision for signage which specify that no dumping, clearing or other works are permitted in the Conservation Area. Such signage shall be replaced as required. The Applicant shall make copies of the <i>Tetratheca Juncea Management Plan</i> available to OEH, Councils and the Community Consultative Committee within 14 days of approval by the Director-General.	YES	NPWS provided correspondence advising they were satisfied with the T Juncea Management Plan in November 2000.  The property boundary of the Conservation Area is fenced along John Renshaw Drive and the T. Juncea areas are pegged but not fenced or signed. (The presence of a fence or signage around the specific areas of T. Juncea would highlight their location and result in unwanted attention and possibly vandalism to the area). The current status of the Conservation Area indicates that there is no intrusion of work areas or other disturbance to the T. Juncea locations.  A biologist monitors the T. Juncea areas to keep records of the status of growth and flowering.
70	Within six months of this Consent, or as otherwise agreed by the Director-General, the Applicant shall identify a bushland area(s) in the region that will adequately compensate for the impact of the mine on biodiversity, provide compensatory habitat and be managed for the primary purposes of conservation. The area shall be identified in consultation with OEH and Councils and be to the satisfaction of the Director-General. Identification of the bushland area(s) shall include:  (i) a detailed assessment of the current characteristics and ecological values of existing ecosystems affected by the mine, including the habitat of threatened species identified in the EIS as possibly occurring in the area and the Spotted Gum Ironbark community;  (ii) identification of conservation objectives to be achieved by the establishment of the bushland area(s), with reference to the <i>Regional Biodiversity Strategy</i> and the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development;	YES	(i) A detailed assessment of the current flora and fauna and habitat values of the mine site was conducted by Barker Harle in 2001.  (ii) The <i>Bushland Area Management Plan</i> was prepared and submitted to the Director-General in 2005 for approval. The Plan included identification of conservation objectives.  (iii) NPWS provided Donaldson Mine with a number of compensatory bushland areas to consider in 2001. Donaldson assessed inclusion of land around the mining lease, and have established the Conservation Area for bushland protection, within the mine lease area.

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>Tetratheca Juncea Conservation Area (Cont'd)</b>			
70 Cont'd	(iii) consideration of alternative locations within the region, including, but not limited to, the land proposed as compensatory area in the EIS (i.e. land adjoining the mine site); (iv) a detailed assessment of appropriate boundaries, size and shape of the bushland area(s), in relation to the characteristics, values and objectives; (v) consideration of appropriate management options necessary to protect the conservation values; and (vi) consideration of opportunities to incorporate cultural heritage conservation into the bushland area(s).		
<b>BUSHLAND AREA</b>			
71	In identifying the bushland area(s), the following broad criteria shall be applied: (i) a ratio of 2:1 in terms of compensatory area to the area to be directly impacted by mining and associated infrastructure; (ii) the vegetation communities and habitat values of the bushland area(s) are to be broadly representative of the area which will be subject to mining and contain a similar suite of fauna species; (iii) the location of the bushland area(s) will aim to consolidate existing reserves in the lower Hunter Area; and (iv) reserve design criteria, including edge-to-area ratio, size and connectivity shall be taken into account.	YES	(i) The Donaldson owned property around the mine area has been retained as a buffer and compensatory conservation area.  (ii) The compensatory area of bushland is adjacent to and surrounds the mining area and is representative of the vegetation communities and habitat present on the disturbed areas.  (iii) The compensatory area around the Donaldson Mine is contiguous with the Ironbark-Spotted Gum vegetative corridors in the Maitland area.
72	Upon approval of the identified bushland area(s) by the Director-General, the Applicant shall: (i) secure care, control and management of the bushland area(s) prior to the commencement of mining; (ii) retain management and ownership of the land for a minimum of 36 years from the commencement of construction, unless other arrangements are agreed in accordance with Condition 73; and (iii) prepare and implement a Management Plan for that area in consultation with OEH and to the satisfaction of the Director-General, during the period in which the Applicant is responsible for management. The Management Plan shall be consistent with the <i>Flora and Fauna Management Plan</i> (Conditions 76-79) and consider the integration of cultural conservation objectives and management. The Applicant shall make copies of the Management Plan available to OEH and the Community Consultative Committee within 14 days of approval by the Director-General. For the purposes of the Conditions of this Consent, the bushland area(s) approved by the Director-General shall be known as the Bushland Conservation Area until the completion of the period referred to in Condition 72(ii) and any Conditions relating to Conservation Areas shall apply to that area during that period. The Management Plan referred to in Condition 72(iii) shall be referred to as the Bushland Conservation Area Management Plan.	YES	(i) The bushland area around the mine operations is owned by Donaldson Mine and managed as part of the overall land management strategies.  (ii) See above. Management will continue until 2036.  (iii) The <i>Bushland Conservation Area Management Plan</i> was developed in consultation with the NWPS and the Plan submitted to the Director-General on 31 October 2005. (Refer to MCoA 74).



**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Page 21 of 37

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>BUSHLAND AREA (Cont'd)</b>			
73	The Applicant shall undertake negotiations with the OEH and Councils to reach agreement on the long term tenure and management status of the Bushland Conservation Area. These negotiations must commence within six months of commencement of construction.	YES	<p>Donaldson Coal provided information on the management of the proposed bushland conservation area to NPWS in May 2001 and undertook consultation and negotiations with the authorities. A Draft Plan of Management for the Bushland Conservation Area was presented to the D-G in February 2005 and the Plan revised and submitted to the D-G in October 2005.</p> <p>Studies by DEC during 2006 in preparation for the <i>Draft Lower Hunter Conservation Plan</i> (LHCP), which was to be released together with the final LHRS, identified parts of the Donaldson land for conservation reserve and bio-banking investment (NAPS Map). The identified conservation land does not align exactly with the Donaldson Bushland Conservation Area.</p> <p>Donaldson, along with other Lower Hunter major landowners, was formally requested by DEC to consider dedication of lands for conservation in the reserve system prior to announcement of the final LHRS and Draft LHCP.</p> <p>Donaldson presented a formal proposal to DEC in late 2006, and discussions with B&amp;CD are continuing for a major portion of the Donaldson land to be dedicated as conservation reserve or nominated as Bio-banking investment area. The likely outcome of the intensive investigations described above is that some 400-500 hectares of the Donaldson land may be placed in permanent conservation (via either the reserve system or bio-banking) and the remainder of the land will be zoned consistent with the final LHRS.</p>
74	Prior to 31 October 2005, the Applicant shall revise the <i>Bushland Conservation Area Management Plan</i> to compensate for the extension of the disturbance area in the vicinity of Weakleys Flat Creek, to the satisfaction of the Director-General, and provide an updated Plan to the OEH, Councils and the Community Consultative Committee.	YES	The <i>Bushland Conservation Area Management Plan</i> was prepared and revised following consultation with the NPWS/OEH.

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>BUSHLAND AREA (Cont'd)</b>			
74A	By 30 September 2011, the Applicant shall revise the <i>Bushland Conservation Area Management Plan</i> to the satisfaction of the Director-General. The revised plan must:  (i) be prepared in consultation with OEH; and (ii) include the 3 hectares of land removed from the approved mining area, as detailed in the letter from Donaldson Coal Pty Limited to the Minister for Planning dated 25 March 2011.	Yes	The <i>Bushland Conservation Area Management Plan</i> was prepared, submitted to OEH 22 September 2011 and revised following consultation with the NPWS/OEH. The map of the bushland conservation area was updated to compensate for the extension of the disturbance area in the vicinity of Weakleys Flat Creek.
<b>Flora and Fauna Management</b>			
75	The Applicant shall bear the reasonable costs of the appointment by the Director-General of an independent flora and fauna expert(s) to assist in the implementation of the Conditions of this Consent. The independent expert(s) shall: (i) be selected in consultation with the applicant; (ii) assess and advise the Director-General on the Applicant's proposed Conservation Areas and Management Plans for those areas; (iii) assess and advise the Director-General on the Applicant's proposed bushland area(s); (iv) assess and advise the Director-General on the Applicant's proposed Flora and Fauna Management and the Rehabilitation Plan; and (v) assess and advise the Director-General on the Applicant's monitoring of flora and fauna management and rehabilitation.	Planning NSW - condition of approval	Robert Payne was commissioned as an independent flora and fauna expert by Director-General to assess and advise on the flora and fauna management for the Donaldson Mine proposed conservation areas and flora and fauna management plans.
76	The Applicant shall prepare and implement a <i>Flora and Fauna Management Plan</i> for the mine site (in addition to the management plans for specific Conservation Areas), in consultation with NOW, OEH and Councils, and to the satisfaction of the Director-General, prior to the commencement of construction. The Applicant shall make copies of the <i>Flora and Fauna Management Plan</i> available to NOW, OEH, Councils and the Community Consultative Committee within 14 days of approval by the Director-General.	YES	The <i>Flora and Fauna Management Plan</i> was prepared and approved by DUAP in December 2000. The <i>Flora and Fauna Management Plan</i> was implemented for the Donaldson Mine site and the Plan reviewed in 2007 and 2019.  The flora and fauna monitoring programs have been conducted and results summarised in the AEMR's / Annual Reviews.
77	The <i>Flora and Fauna Management Plan</i> shall include but not be limited to: (i) additional surveys to more precisely identify the distribution of known and potential nest and roost trees for owl species. The surveys shall: (a) be undertaken by a person experienced in the identification of owl nest and roost trees, approved by the Director-General; and (b) record the location of known and potential nest and roost trees on the ground by marking the tree and by using either theodolite and electronic measuring equipment or differential GPS; (c) a vegetation map delineating major vegetation communities, topographic features and the location of threatened species habitats, including potential and known owl nest and roost trees;	YES	(i)(a) Additional surveys of owl habitat were conducted by Rod Kavanagh on the Donaldson Mine site during Sept - Oct 2000.  (ii) Figure 4-1 and 4-3 in the <i>Flora and Fauna Management Plan</i> present vegetation communities and locations of threatened species habitats on the Donaldson Mine site.

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>Flora and Fauna Management (Cont'd)</b>			
77 Cont'd	<p>(ii) details of measures to manage the impacts of the development, including:</p> <p>(a) restoration of degraded areas;</p> <p>(b) management of invasive weeds and feral animals;</p> <p>(c) establish an appropriate hazard reduction regime in keeping with the ecological values of the area;</p> <p>(d) revegetation and provision of compensatory areas of equivalent ecological and habitat value where necessary; and</p> <p>(e) strategies to provide increased security for existing habitats and communities;</p> <p>iii) details of measures to manage the impacts of environmental management on flora and fauna, including the impact of erosion and sediment control measures and hazard reduction burning;</p> <p>(v) priorities for action and a timetable for all works outlined in the Plan; and</p> <p>(vi) a program to monitor flora and fauna impacts on undisturbed portions of the mining lease area and downstream environments (such as the Woodberry Swamp). The program shall extend for the life of the mine and for a period thereafter as approved by the Director-General, and include:</p> <p>(a) justification for monitoring intervals and locations;</p> <p>(b) monitoring of the presence and persistence of native flora and fauna species over time, particularly threatened species; and</p> <p>(c) monitoring the effectiveness of management measures.</p>	YES	<p>(iii)(a) Degraded area restoration procedures are presented in the <i>Rehabilitation Plan</i> Dec 2000 section 4.3.7.</p> <p>(iii)(b) Weed management and feral animal control are presented in the <i>Rehabilitation Plan</i> sections 5.2 and 5.3.</p> <p>(iii)(c) Hazard reduction addressed in the <i>Rehabilitation Plan</i> Section 5.4, and the <i>Bushfire Management Plan</i>.</p> <p>(iii)(d) See comments on MCoA 71 to 74.</p> <p>(iii)(e) Protection strategies for existing habitats and communities include pre-clearing surveys of all areas to be disturbed, fenced perimeter of the mine lease area, and the <i>Flora and Fauna Management Plan</i> Section 4.</p> <p>(v) The priorities for action in relation to protection of flora and fauna are outlined in Section 7 of the 2019 <i>Flora and Fauna Management Plan</i>.</p> <p>(vi) Section 5 of the 2019 <i>Flora and Fauna Management Plan</i> describes the proposed monitoring programs.</p>
78	<p>The Flora and Fauna Management Plan shall also include a Rehabilitation Plan that details the measures to be undertaken to progressively rehabilitate disturbed areas of the mine to replicate the original vegetation cover that existed before mining occurred. The Applicant shall be responsible for the management and monitoring of the rehabilitated mine site until such time as the Director-General agrees that restoration has been successful.</p>	YES	<p>The <i>Rehabilitation Management Plan</i> was updated in 2019 and is presented as Appendix 1 in the 2019 Flora and Fauna Management Plan and as a separate document on the Company website.</p>

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>Flora and Fauna Management (Cont'd)</b>			
78A	<p>By 31 October 2011, the Applicant shall revise the <i>Rehabilitation Plan</i> to the satisfaction of the Director-General. The revised plan must:</p> <p>(i) be prepared in consultation with DRE;</p> <p>(ii) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the rehabilitation objectives for the site;</li> <li>• a strategic description of how the rehabilitation of the site would be integrated with surrounding land uses;</li> <li>• a general description of the short and long term measures that would be implemented to rehabilitate the site, including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– managing remnant vegetation and habitat on site;</li> <li>– minimising impacts on fauna;</li> <li>– minimising visual impacts;</li> <li>– conserving and reusing topsoil;</li> <li>– controlling weeds, feral pests, and access; and</li> <li>– managing bushfires;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• detailed performance and completion criteria for the rehabilitation of the site;</li> <li>• a detailed description of how the performance of the rehabilitation works would be monitored over time to achieve the stated objectives and against the relevant performance and completion criteria; and</li> <li>• details of who is responsible for monitoring, reviewing and implementing the plan.</li> </ul>	Yes	<p>The <i>Rehabilitation Plan</i> was also addressed as part of the most recent MOP (period ending 1 May 2021) for the Donaldson Mine and was prepared in consultation with the (then) DRE and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 5.2 Domain Rehabilitation Objectives;</li> <li>• Section 5 <i>Rehabilitation Planning and Management</i> provides a strategic description of integration of the rehabilitation of the site with surrounding land uses;</li> <li>• Section 7 <i>Rehabilitation Implementation</i> describes the short and long term measures to be implemented to rehabilitate the site;</li> <li>• performance and completion criteria for rehabilitation;</li> <li>• Section 8 <i>Rehabilitation Monitoring</i> addresses monitoring performance of the rehabilitation works over time to achieve stated objectives and against performance and completion criteria; and</li> <li>• responsibilities for monitoring, reviewing and implementing the plan.</li> </ul> <p>The new <i>Rehabilitation Management Plan</i> prepared in accordance with the Resources Regulator's Operational Rehabilitation Reform also addresses these matters and replaces the previous MOP.</p>
79	<p>The Applicant shall revise the <i>Flora and Fauna Management Plan</i> as necessary and provide an updated Plan five years after commencement of mining to the Director-General, OEH, Councils and the Community Consultative Committee.</p>	YES	<p>The <i>Flora and Fauna Management Plan</i> was reviewed by Ecobiological in March 2007 and a <i>Revised Flora and Fauna Management Plan</i> submitted to DoP on 17 July 2007. DoP approved the revised Plan on 25 July 2007. A further revision to reflect care and maintenance was prepared on 3 June 2019 and approved by the (then) DPE 4 June 2019.</p>

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Page 25 of 37

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>Flora and Fauna Management (Cont'd)</b>			
80	The Applicant shall participate in (and if appropriate, contribute such reasonable funds as determined by the Director-General in consultation with OEH) research into the Powerful Owl and Masked Owl habitat requirements in the region, and the habitat requirements and lifecycle of <i>Tetratheca Juncea</i> .	YES	Donaldson Mine supported projects by the University of Newcastle with financial and technical help for: Deborah Landenberger - 2 year Honours project 'Defining the Niche of T. Juncea'; and Adam Blundell with Rod Kavanagh during 2002-2003 for 'Comparing Ecology of Powerful Owl in Disturbed and Undisturbed Environments'. Both these projects have been completed.
<b>HERITAGE</b>			
<b>Heritage Statutory Requirements</b>			
81	Prior to commencement of construction, the Applicant shall: (i) comply with the statutory requirements of OEH in relation to works affecting Aboriginal sites; and (ii) undertake a targeted archaeological survey of the slopes component within the mining impact area in cooperation with the Aboriginal community. Any Aboriginal sites located will be recorded, the significance of the sites assessed, and management strategies for the sites identified.	YES	Management of the Aboriginal heritage sites occurs in accordance with the <i>Aboriginal Sites Management Plan</i> and the status of management is reported in the respective AEMR / Annual Review.
82	If, during the course of construction, the Applicant becomes aware of any heritage or archaeological material, all work likely to affect the material shall cease immediately and the relevant authorities consulted about an appropriate course of action prior to recommencement of work. The relevant authorities may include OEH, the Heritage Office, and the Local Aboriginal Land Councils. Any necessary permits or consents shall be obtained and complied with prior to recommencement of work.	YES	Section 90 Consents to Destroy under the <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1979</i> , were obtained for Aboriginal artefact areas DMS1 on 22 April 2000 and ISF1 and ISF2 on 3 May 2000. No further Section 90 Consents have been required since that time.
<b>Aboriginal Heritage Management</b>			
83	Prior to commencement of construction, the Applicant shall establish an Aboriginal Conservation Area along Four Mile Creek and tributaries in accordance with a plan approved by the Director-General. The plan shall include: (i) identification of an appropriate boundary and the basis on which the boundary has been selected; (ii) a map at a scale of 1:1 000 or larger which clearly delineates the Conservation Area boundary and specific features; and (iii) documentation of consultations with OEH and Aboriginal community groups in relation to the definition of the Conservation Area.	YES	(i) A 50 metre buffer along Four Mile Creek as an Aboriginal Conservation Area (ACA) has been established by Donaldson Coal.  The ACA boundary is shown in Figure 2.3 of the <i>Aboriginal Sites Management Plan</i> . ii) Maps of the Four Mile Creek Conservation Area and other Conservation Areas (1:1 000 scale) have been prepared by Donaldson Coal for the Donaldson Mine area. (iii) Consultation with the Mindaribba Aboriginal Local Land Council was held during the preparation of the <i>Aboriginal Sites Management Plan</i> . NPWS consultation and correspondence was available on file.

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>Aboriginal Heritage Management (Cont'd)</b>			
84	The Applicant shall prepare and implement an <i>Aboriginal Sites Management Plan</i> in consultation with the Aboriginal community, Councils and OEH, and to the satisfaction of the Director-General, prior to the commencement of construction. The Applicant shall make copies of the <i>Aboriginal Sites Management Plan</i> available to the Director-General, Aboriginal community, Councils and the Community Consultative Committee within 14 days of approval by OEH.	YES	An <i>Aboriginal Sites Management Plan</i> was prepared prior to commencement of mining operations in 2000, with Supplementary Plans prepared for Years 2 to 5 of the operations.  The <i>Aboriginal Sites Management Plan</i> has been submitted to the relevant authorities within 14 days of approval by the NPWS.  The <i>Aboriginal Sites Management Plan</i> has not required revision since 2005.
85	The Management Plan shall include, but not be limited to: (i) documentation of consultation with the relevant Aboriginal community groups to identify any outstanding concerns they may have with the project and a clear statement about how these concerns will be addressed, including any action to be taken; (ii) identification of conservation objectives for the site as a whole and for the Conservation Area specifically; (iii) a program to monitor the impacts of the development on the Conservation Area, including justification for monitoring locations and intervals; (iv) strategies to achieve conservation objectives, including an access policy; (v) the provision of fencing to permit faunal movement and the removal of fencing within six months of completion of mining; (vi) further investigations; and (vii) long term management requirements upon completion of mining.	YES	(i) Consultation with the Mindaribba Aboriginal Local Land Council is addressed in the Plan with relevant correspondence attached in Appendix 1 of the Plan.  (ii) Conservation objectives are addressed in Section 1.3 of the <i>Aboriginal Sites Management Plan</i> .  (iii) Monitoring of the Conservation Area is outlined in Section 2.1 and 3 of the <i>Aboriginal Sites Management Plan</i> . The location of the monitoring datum points are illustrated in Figure 2.4 of the Plan.  (iv) Strategies to achieve the conservation objectives are outlined in Section 2 of the <i>Aboriginal Sites Management Plan</i> .  (v) The boundary of the Mining lease area and the Donaldson owned land is fenced.  (vi) The mining lease area was re-surveyed for Year 2 to 5 of the mining operations. Ongoing monitoring and surveys will occur prior to disturbance of any new areas required for mining.
86	The Applicant shall revise the <i>Aboriginal Sites Management Plan</i> as necessary and provide an updated Plan five years after commencement of mining to the Director-General, OEH, Councils and the Community Consultative Committee.	YES	The <i>Aboriginal Sites Management Plan</i> was subjected to annual review until 2005 and amendments to the Plan made by Umwelt as required.  The Plan has not required revision since 2005.

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Page 27 of 37

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>WASTE</b>			
87	The Applicant shall prepare and implement a <i>Waste Management Plan</i> in consultation with OEH, DRE and the Hunter Waste Planning and Management Board, and to the satisfaction of the Director-General, prior to commencement of construction. The Applicant shall make copies of the <i>Waste Management Plan</i> available to Councils and the Community Consultative Committee within 14 days of approval by the Director-General.	YES	The <i>Waste Management Plan</i> was prepared prior to commencement of construction of the mine. The Plan was submitted to DUAP and approved on 10 October 2000.  Copies of the <i>Waste Management Plan</i> were distributed to the Councils and the CCC, within 14 days of approval by the Director-General.
88	The <i>Waste Management Plan</i> shall include, but not be limited to the management of the mine site to prevent dumping of waste; and the management and treatment of Potentially Acid Forming waste.	YES	Management of waste streams including overburden, coarse rejects material and fine reject material is included in Section 7 of the <i>Waste Management Plan</i> .  The management and treatment of potential acid forming (PAF) material is addressed in the geotechnical report and there is ongoing assessment of PAF material to ensure application of best practice management options.
89	The Applicant shall meet the requirements of Councils, OEH and Hunter Water Corporation with respect to water and sewer.	YES	Potable water for use on the mine site is supplied from the Hunter Water Corporation.  There is no discharge to sewer from the site operations. All ablutions are connected to onsite biocycle systems.
<b>VISUAL AMENITY</b>			
<b>Landscaping</b>			
90	The Applicant shall provide a minimum of 50 metres of landscaping between the outer edge of the bund wall and the edge of John Renshaw Drive. The 50 metres may include landscaping within the road verge if agreed by Cessnock Council.	YES	The <i>Landscape Management Plan</i> has been implemented with revegetation of the 50m strip along the power-line easement between John Renshaw Drive and the earthen bund on the edge of the high-wall of the open cut.
91	The Applicant shall, within three months of the date of this Consent, or within such further period as Councils may require, submit for the Councils' approval a detailed Landscaping Plan covering all land within the proposed mining area (including the haul road and transmission line easements) and road reserve along the frontage to John Renshaw Drive. The Applicant shall engage a suitably qualified person to assist in the landscaping plan.	YES	The <i>Landscape Management Plan</i> was reviewed and revised in March 2008 by GSS Environmental.  The 2008 <i>Landscape Management Plan</i> is an integrated plan for all the Donaldson Coal projects (i.e. the Donaldson Mine, Tasman Mine and Abel Mine).

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>VISUAL AMENITY (Cont'd)</b>			
<b>Landscaping (Cont'd)</b>			
92	The Landscaping Plan shall be consistent with the <i>Environmental Management Strategy</i> and include: (i) provision for the establishment of trees and shrubs and the construction of mounding or bunding along the planned highwall and any other areas identified as necessary by the Councils for the maintenance of satisfactory visual amenity and the re-establishment of flora and fauna habitats and corridors; (ii) appropriate erosion control and sediment control practices for earthworks associated with the landscaping; (iii) details of the visual appearance of all buildings, structures, facilities or works (including paint colours and specifications). Buildings and structures shall be designed and constructed so as to present a neat and orderly appearance and to blend as far as possible with the surrounding landscape; and (iv) details, specifications and staged work programs to be undertaken, including a maintenance program of all landscape works, building materials and cladding.	YES	The <i>Landscape Management Plan 2000</i> addresses the establishment of trees and shrubs for visual amenity and re-establishment of flora and fauna corridors in Section 4.3. The <i>Landscape Management Plan 2000</i> addresses erosion and sediment control in Section 4.3 and refers to the Erosion and Sediment Management Plan. The <i>Landscape Management Plan 2000</i> addresses the visual appearance of buildings, structures, facilities and works in Section 4.0. The <i>Landscape Management Plan 2000</i> addresses the staged work programs for maintenance program of all landscape works, building materials and cladding in Section 4.2
93	The Applicant shall implement the approved Plan in accordance with Councils' requirements and make copies available to the Community Consultative Committee within 14 days of approval by Councils.	YES	Copies of the <i>Landscape Management Plan 2000</i> were provided to the CCC following approval by the Councils 9 March 2000.  The revised <i>Landscape Management Plan</i> was submitted to the CCC in 2008.
94	The Applicant shall plant screening vegetation on properties at higher elevation and with views across the mine site in the Black Hill area if requested in writing by the landowner, within three months of that request. The species, density and location of the plantings shall be determined in consultation with the landowner.	Not activated	No such requests received.
95	The Applicant shall lodge a landscaping bond with Cessnock Council, to a maximum of \$10,000 at any one time, for landscaping during the life of mine. This bond does not affect rehabilitation works covered by the <i>Mining Act</i> .	No Longer Applicable	Landscaping bond of \$10,000 was lodged with the Cessnock City Council on 19 April 2007. This bond was previously refunded due to the satisfactory completion of the works.
<b>Lighting</b>			
96	The Applicant shall screen or direct all onsite lighting and vehicle lights away from residences and roadways to the satisfaction of Councils. All screening to be completed prior to commissioning of the coal preparation plant and associated facilities.	YES	Lighting from site activities has not given rise to complaints. No lighting is used on high points at night and no light scatter occurs to roadways or residential areas from the Donaldson Mine operations.



**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Page 29 of 37

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>HAZARDS, RISKS AND SAFETY</b>			
97	The Applicant shall: (i) provide adequate fire protection works on site. This shall include one fully equipped fire fighting unit on standby and hazard reduction works at a time determined by the relevant Council, with particular attention to boundaries of adjoining land holdings;	YES	(i) Meetings have been held between Donaldson Mine and the Cessnock City Council / Thornton Fire Rural Fire Brigade/ Benwerrin Rural Fire Brigade in relation to access to the mine site in case of fire.
	(ii) submit an annual report on fire management activities to the local Bush Fire Management Committee; and	YES	(ii) A <i>Bushfire Management Plan</i> for the areas owned by Donaldson Coal was prepared in 2004 and submitted to the Rural Fire Service for review. Following a site inspection the RFS provided comments and the Plan was updated and finalised. A report on controlled burn-off at the Donaldson site was forwarded to the RFS for inclusion in the Bush Fire Management Committee folder in Oct 2005. Hazard burning is conducted on the Donaldson Mine site and reported to the Bushfire Management Committee by the RFS. Mechanical works along the southern and eastern sections of the Avalon Estate at Thornton is also carried out annually by Donaldson and reported to RFS. An inspection of the Donaldson Mine site with the RFS is conducted at least annually.
	(iii) ensure that all dangerous goods and materials stored on site are stored in accordance with the relevant Australian standards.	YES	Fuels and lubricants are no longer stored within the Donaldson Open Cut Coal Mine area.
<b>UTILITIES AND SERVICES</b>			
98	The Applicant shall consult with affected service authorities and make arrangements satisfactory to those authorities for the protection or relocation of utilities and services (such as transmission lines and pipelines) at the Applicant's expense, prior to any existing utilities or services being affected by mining activity. Relocation of utilities and services shall be conducted in accordance with the relevant Management Plans and the Erosion and Sediment Control Plan(s).	YES	The Energy Australia 11kV power-line was relocated along an easement adjacent to the John Renshaw Drive boundary of the mine lease, in 2002.  Part of the Hunter Water Corporation water pipeline was relocated for the progression of the Donaldson Mine, in accordance with the (then)MOP.  Telstra lines off the new intersection on John Renshaw Drive were relocated in 2006.

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
99	Prior to commencement of construction, or as otherwise agreed by the Councils, the Applicant shall design, construct and seal the private haul road and access road to the satisfaction of the Councils, and with consideration of the impact on the fragmentation of fauna habitat and fauna movement.	YES	The internal haul road was constructed from Donaldson Mine to Bloomfield CPP and Coal Loader in 2001. Cessnock City Council advised it did not require to approve the road construction as it was an internal haul road.  The <i>Flora and Fauna Management Plan</i> included pre-clearing protocol, road design and general measures covering erosion and sediment control, removal of weeds and rubbish, and incident reporting that were applied to the construction of the road.
100	No coal shall be hauled on public roads.	YES	No coal is transported on public roads.
<b>TRANSPORT AND ACCESS</b>			
101	The Applicant shall carry out intersection improvements as determined necessary by the Regional Traffic Committee as a result of the development and by such times as directed by the Regional Traffic Committee.	YES	A Development Application was submitted to the Cessnock City Council for the John Renshaw Drive intersection in November 2001.  The Hunter Regional Traffic Committee considered the DA and recommended a number of changes, and the plan was amended and re-submitted to the Council. The Council re-exhibited the DA and granted consent in July 2003.  The intersection from John Renshaw Drive to the Donaldson Mine access road was completed in accordance with the consent.
102	If closure of John Renshaw Drive is agreed by the Regional Traffic Committee under Condition 25(4), the Applicant shall: (i) pay \$20,000 to Cessnock City Council to upgrade the alignment and surface of the unsealed western end of Black Hill Road; (ii) provide a water cart and apply water to the unsealed western end of Black Hill Road to the requirements of Cessnock City Council prior to each closure of John Renshaw Drive for blasting; and (iii) prepare a <i>Traffic Management Plan</i> for the approval of the RTA in relating to the closure of John Renshaw Drive during blasting.	YES	The \$20,000 contribution was provided to the Cessnock City Council in November 2004 for the upgrade of the western end of Black Hill Road. The improvements to Black Hill Road were completed by Cessnock City Council.  The improvement of the Black Hill Road intersection with a John Renshaw Drive turning lane, was constructed during 2010 as part of the Abel Underground approval.  Donaldson received a Road Occupancy Licence for the closure of John Renshaw Drive during blasting.

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Page 31 of 37

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>INITIAL COAL WASHING (Cont'd)</b>			
103	The Applicant shall provide for signalling of the Bloomfield rail loop to the satisfaction of Freight Corp prior to the commencement of mining.	YES	Freightcorp correspondence provided options for implementation of safe working procedures for the rail loop to satisfy MCoA 103.  Bloomfield upgraded the rail system alarm signals on the Entry road to the mines, from the old key system. The management of trains on the loop has been upgraded with implementation of safe work practices.
<b>INITIAL COAL WASHING</b>			
104	Upon commencement of coal extraction, the Applicant shall initially make use of the coal preparation plant (CPP) at the adjoining Bloomfield coal mine for up to two years from commencement of mining or such other period as approved by the Director-General. This will allow the Applicant to: (i) trial the washing of Donaldson coal to assist in the determination of its washing characteristics; and (ii) commence the earliest possible coal extraction at Donaldson, and hence hasten project completion.	YES	Approval for the ongoing use of the Bloomfield CPP is now in place under the Abel Mine consent with an extended agreement between Bloomfield Coal and Donaldson Coal.
105	The haulage route for raw coal from the Donaldson pit to the Bloomfield CPP shall be the same as that proposed for haulage of product coal from the proposed Donaldson CPP to the existing Bloomfield rail loading facility up to the point of intersection with the Bloomfield Mine access road, and thence westward along the Bloomfield Mine access road to the CPP, unless otherwise agreed to with the owners of Bloomfield. However, any variation to the route shall be considered to determine whether a modification to this Consent is required to enable the variation.	YES	Donaldson Coal constructed an internal sealed haul road to transport ROM coal to the Bloomfield CPP, the road alignment crossing Four Mile Creek.
106	The Applicant shall notify the Director-General within eighteen months of the commencement of mining as to the results of the Bloomfield washery trials.	YES	See comment on MCoA 104.
<b>COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT</b>			
<b>Community Consultative Committee</b>			
107	The Applicant shall establish a Community Consultative Committee which shall be chaired by an independent chairperson approved by the Director-General. Selection of representatives shall be agreed by the Director-General and include (unless otherwise agreed by the Director-General) two representatives from the Applicant (including the Environmental Officer), four community representatives (including a representative of the local Aboriginal Community) and representatives of the local Councils. Representatives from relevant government agencies (including DUAP) may be invited to attend meetings of the Committee as required.	YES	The CCC was established on 30 May 2000 and meetings have been held regularly during operations. As the mine has ceased operations and been rehabilitated, no further meetings are currently planned.

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (Cont'd)</b>			
<b>Community Consultative Committee (Cont'd)</b>			
108	The Committee may make comments and recommendations about the implementation of the development. The Applicant shall ensure that the Committee has access to the necessary plans and/or studies for such purposes. The Applicant shall consider the recommendations and comments of the Committee and provide a response to the Committee and the Director-General.	YES	Management Plans have previously been provided to the CCC for comment and information. Discussion of management plans occurred at the CCC meetings.
109	The Applicant shall, at its own expense: (i) provide appropriate facilities for meetings of the Committee;	YES	CCC Meetings were previously held at Donaldson Mine offices. Donaldson arranged and provided the required material and administrative backup for the meetings.
	(ii) nominate a representative to attend all meetings of the Committee;	YES	Donaldson Coal nominated representative to attend all meetings is the Environmental Manager- Phillip Brown.
	(iii) ensure that the first meeting is held prior to commencement of construction, that meetings are held at least every six months for the first 24 months from the date of the mining lease and at least annually thereafter;	YES	The first meeting of the CCC was held on 30 May 2000 prior to commencement of construction and subsequent meetings were held on a regular basis. The meetings were arranged by the Independent Chairperson as required.
	(iv) provide to the Committee regular information on the progress of the work and monitoring results;	YES	Reports on project status, monitoring results and AEMR's/Annual Reviews and complaints are provided to the CCC and published on the Company website.
	(v) promptly provide to the Committee such other information as the Chairperson of the Committee may reasonably request concerning the environmental performance of the development; and	YES	Material is provided to the CCC as and when requested as detailed in the CCC Minutes.
	(vi) provide reasonable access for site inspections by the Committee.	YES	Site inspections by members of the CCC to view the mine and rehabilitation areas, following CCC Meetings.
110	The Applicant shall establish a trust fund to be managed by the Chairperson of the Committee to facilitate functioning of the Committee, and pay \$2,000 per annum to the fund for the duration of mining operations. The payment shall be indexed according to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) at the time of payment. The first payment shall be made by the date of the first Committee meeting.	YES	A trust fund for the functioning of the CCC was established in May 2000 and has been managed by the Independent Chairperson. Donaldson Coal provides all the requirements for the CCC Meetings with any additional funding reported to be provided upon request by the Chairperson.

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Page 33 of 37

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (Cont'd)</b>			
<b>Community Information</b>			
111	The Applicant shall, in consultation with Councils, ensure that the local community is kept informed of the progress of the project, including prior notice of: (i) the nature of works proposed for the forthcoming period; (ii) hours of construction; (iii) a 24 hour contact telephone number; (iv) any traffic disruptions and controls; (v) proposed blasting program, and any changes to the program; (vi) work required outside the normal working hours; (vii) individuals' rights under the Conditions of this Consent (such as the rights for acquisition or independent monitoring) and mechanisms proposed to be used to safeguard the community and individual properties against adverse impacts from the development.	YES	Since June 2003, community information has been made available on the Donaldson website.
112	By 30 September 2011, the Applicant shall: (i) make copies of the following publicly available on its website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all relevant statutory approvals for the development;</li> <li>• all approved strategies, plans and programs required under the conditions of this consent;</li> <li>• monitoring results, reported in accordance with the specifications in any approved plans or programs required under the conditions of this consent or any other approval;</li> <li>• a complaints register, which is to be updated on a monthly basis;</li> <li>• minutes of CCC meetings;</li> <li>• the Annual Environmental Management Reports required under condition 114;</li> <li>• any independent environmental audit of the development, and the Applicant's response to the recommendations in any audit;</li> <li>• any other matter required by the Director-General; and</li> </ul> (ii) keep this information up-to-date, to the satisfaction of the Director-General.	YES	Donaldson website has been established and information on the CCC, monitoring and company status and activities is available on the site, including Minutes of the CCC Meetings, AEMR's / Annual Reviews and any project Newsletters.
<b>Complaints</b>			
113	(1) The Applicant shall record details of all complaints received and ensure that a response is provided to the complainant within 24 hours. (2) If the Applicant's response does not address the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant within six weeks, the Applicant shall refer the matter to an independent mediator (approved by the Director-General) and bear the costs of such mediation. The Applicant shall immediately carry out such works as agreed through the mediation process. (3) The Applicant shall make available a 3 monthly report on complaints to the Community Consultative Committee and to relevant government agencies and the Councils upon request; and include a summary in the AEMR. The report shall include the complaints that have been resolved with or without mediation.	YES	(1) The Complaints Register is on a database held at the Donaldson Mine office and maintained by the Environment Manager. (2) This requirement of the condition had not been activated at the time of the audit. (3) A Complaints Report was prepared and presented to the CCC at each meeting. A summary of complaints/actions/status is presented in the AEMR's / Annual Reviews.

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>ANNUAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT REPORT</b>			
114	<p>The Applicant shall prepare and submit an Annual Environmental Management Report (AEMR) throughout the life of the mine to the satisfaction of the Director-General. The AEMR shall review the performance of the mine against the <i>Environmental Management Strategy</i> and the Conditions of this Consent, and other licences and approvals relating to the mine. To enable ready comparison with the EIS's predictions, diagrams and tables, the report shall include, but not be limited to, the following matters:</p> <p>(i) an annual compliance audit of the performance of the project against Conditions of this Consent and statutory approvals;</p> <p>(ii) a review of the effectiveness of the environmental management of the mine in terms of OEHL, NOW, DRE, and the Councils' requirements and provide an explanation of any variance;</p> <p>(iii) results of all environmental monitoring required under this Consent or other approvals, including interpretations and discussion by a suitably qualified person;</p> <p>(iv) identification of trends in monitoring results over the life of the mine;</p> <p>(v) a comparison of the actual impacts with predictions made in the EIS and supporting documents;</p> <p>(vi) a review of the social impact of the mine, including mitigation works and acquisition;</p> <p>(vii) a listing of any variations obtained to approvals applicable to the subject area during the previous year;</p> <p>(viii) the outcome of the water budget for the year, the quantity of water used from water storages and details of discharge of any water from the site;</p> <p>(ix) rehabilitation report; and</p> <p>(x) environmental management targets and strategies for the next year, taking into account identified trends in monitoring results.</p>	YES	<p>The AEMR's / Annual Review have been prepared in accordance with the relevant guidelines and submitted to the DPE and Resources Regulator.</p>
		YES	<p>(i) Compliance Audit conducted by Donaldson Mine in August 2001. Compliance with the conditions of consent is commented on in each AEMR / Annual Review.</p> <p>(ii) Commented on throughout the Annual Review.</p> <p>(iii) Environmental monitoring data included in the Annual Review in the relevant sections.</p> <p>(iv) Trends in monitoring data are presented under each specific heading in Sections 6 &amp; 7 of the Annual Review.</p> <p>(v) Comparison with the EIS predictions for the development are provided in each AEMR / Annual Review.</p> <p>(vi) No acquisition requests have been made to the time of this audit. Mitigation measures are part of the normal mine operation.</p> <p>(vii) Approval status is summarised in Section 3 of the Annual Review</p> <p>(viii) Water management is reported in Section 7 of the Annual Review.</p> <p>(ix) Rehabilitation progress is reported in Section 8 of the Annual Review.</p> <p>(x) Targets and strategies for the next 12 months are reported in Section 12 of the Annual Review.</p>
115	<p>In preparing the AEMR, the Applicant shall:</p> <p>(i) consult with the Director-General during preparation of each report for any additional requirements;</p> <p>(ii) comply with any requirements of the Director-General or other relevant government agency and with any guidelines current at the time of reporting; and</p> <p>(iii) ensure that the first report is completed and submitted within 12 months of this Consent, or at a date determined by the Director-General in consultation with the DRE and the OEHL.</p>	YES	<p>Actions / requirements raised by DPE and Resources Regulator from previous Annual Review have been summarised and addressed within this Annual Review (Section 5).</p>

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>ANNUAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT REPORT (Cont'd)</b>			
116	The Applicant shall ensure that copies of each AEMR are submitted at the same time to DP&I, OEH, NOW, Councils and the Community Consultative Committee, and made available for public information at Councils within 14 days of submission to these authorities.	YES	Copies of the previous AEMR's / Annual Reviews prepared for the Donaldson Mine have been submitted to the authorities following receipt of acceptance of the document by the (then) DII (or DPI-MR) and the Director-General.  The AEMR's / Annual Reviews are made publicly available on the Company website.
<b>INDEPENDENT ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT</b>			
117	At 3 yearly intervals after the commencement of mining and at the completion of mining, unless the Director-General directs otherwise, the Applicant shall commission and pay the full cost of an Independent Environmental Audit of the development.	YES	An Independent Environmental Audit was conducted in March 2015 by Trevor Brown & Associates to fulfil the requirements of MCoA 117. The (then) DPE confirmed via email on 31 October 2018 that no further audits are required unless otherwise directed by the Secretary.
	This audit must: (i) be conducted by a suitably qualified, experienced and independent person whose appointment has been endorsed by the Director-General; (ii) be consistent with <i>ISO 19011:2002 – Guideline for Quality and/or Environmental Systems Auditing</i> , or equivalent updated versions of these guidelines; (iii) assess the environmental performance of the development, and its effects on the surrounding environment; (iv) assess whether the development is complying with the relevant standards, performance measures and statutory requirements; (v) review the adequacy of the Applicant's <i>Environmental Management Strategy</i> and <i>Environmental Monitoring Program</i> ; (vi) and if necessary, recommend measures or actions to improve the environmental performance of the development, and/or the environmental management and monitoring systems.	YES	The March 2015 audit was conducted by Trevor Brown of Trevor Brown & Associates Applied Environmental Management Consultants. The conduct of the 2015 audit was consistent with the requirements of ISO 19011. The environmental performance of the development was reviewed and comments are provided in Section 4 of the audit report. The development demonstrated a high degree of compliance with the standards, performance measures and statutory requirements relevant to the development (v) Comment on the <i>Environmental Management Strategy</i> and <i>Environmental Monitoring Program</i> are provided in Sections 4.1 and 4.2 of the audit report
118	The audit shall: (i) assess compliance with the requirements of this Consent, licences and approvals; (ii) review the effectiveness of the environmental management of the mine, and any mitigation works; (iii) be carried out at the Applicant's expense; and (iv) be conducted by a duly qualified independent person or team approved by the Director-General in consultation with the Councils.	YES	An Independent Environmental Audit was conducted in March 2015 by Trevor Brown & Associates to fulfil the requirements of MCoA 117 and 118.
119	The Director-General may, after assessing compliance in accordance with this Consent and after considering any submission made by the OEH, NOW, DRE, the Councils or the Community Consultative Committee on the report, notify the Applicant of any reasonable requirements for compliance with this Consent. The Applicant shall comply with those requirements within such time as the Director-General may require.	Noted	

**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>COMPLIANCE</b>			
120	The Applicant shall comply with all requirements of the Director-General in respect of the implementation of any measures arising from the Conditions of this Consent. The Applicant shall bring to the attention of the Director-General any matter that may require further investigation and the issuing of instructions from the Director-General. The Applicant shall ensure that these instructions are implemented to the satisfaction of the Director-General within such time that the Director-General may specify. If necessary, the Director-General may order the Applicant to cease work until non-compliance has been addressed to her satisfaction.	Noted	
121	The Applicant shall submit for the approval of the Director-General compliance reports concerning the implementation of Conditions of this Consent as applicable: (i) before the commencement of construction works; and (ii) before the commencement of mining.	YES	Compliance Reports were prepared and submitted to DUAP for construction of the Donaldson Mine on 20 October 2000, and a Compliance Report was submitted to DUAP prior to commencement of mining works on 17 January 2001.
<b>Y2K COMPLIANCE</b>			
122	One month prior to the commencement of operation of any automated system, included embedded systems used for operation, pollution control, monitoring and safety (including fire safety), the Applicant shall provide the Director-General with a report confirming that the system(s) has been tested in accordance with the most recent edition of BSI/DISC PD2000-1 to confirm continuous time and date functionality of that system.	YES	The Donaldson Mine commenced after 1 January 2000. Systems installed and operated for the Donaldson Mine are Y2K compliant.
<b>DISPUTE RESOLUTION</b>			
123	In the event that the Applicant and an individual, the Councils or a Government agency, other than DP&I, cannot agree on the specification or requirements applicable under this Consent, the matter shall be referred by either party to the Director-General or if not resolved within six months, to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, whose determination of the disagreement shall be final and binding on the parties.	Noted	The development consent was accepted by the parties and construction and commencement of mining occurred after 1 January 2000.



**Table A3.1 (Cont'd)**  
**Donaldson Development Approval – Compliance Review**

Page 37 of 37

Cond. No.	Minister's Conditions of Consent (MCoA)	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>OTHER ISSUES</b>			
124	The Applicant shall participate in (including a financial contribution if appropriate, to a maximum of \$10,000) the preparation of a revised Planning Strategy for the Thornton-Beresfield area. Any such financial contribution shall be paid as directed by the Director-General and any amounts not expended in the review upon completion of mining shall be refunded to the Applicant.	Not activated	<p>The Thornton-Beresford Area has been incorporated into the Lower Hunter Area and a Planning Strategy as an employment generating area with a transport internodal hub proposed for the area.</p> <p>Donaldson has participated in meetings associated with the Thornton-Killingworth study, <i>Lower Hunter Regional Strategy</i> and <i>Lower Hunter Conservation Plan</i>.</p> <p>Donaldson also made some financial contributions including analysis and participation in the planning of a Newcastle rail by-pass line through the Stony Pinch site.</p> <p>The <i>Lower Hunter Regional Strategy and Conservation Plan</i> is not yet finalised, but Donaldson Coal continues to be involved in discussions with the authorities on the Strategy and Plan.</p>
125	The Applicant shall provide reasonable funding to Councils for independent counselling services for any landowner within 1.5 kilometres of the mining lease area who may request support on stress-related matters resulting from the development.	Not Activated	No requests have been made for the activation of this condition.
126	Within six months of the date of this Consent and in each AEMR thereafter, the Applicant shall report to the Director-General on the number of personnel employed by the mine in construction, mining and environmental management during that reporting period. The report shall compare the employment figures with those predicted in the EIS.	YES	As the mine is now on care and maintenance there are a total of eight full-time equivalent positions on site.

**Table A3.2  
Mining Lease 1461 – Compliance Review**

Cond. No.	Requirement	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>GENERAL CONDITIONS</b>			
1	<p>Notice to Landholders</p> <p>(a) Within 90 days from the date of grant or renewal of this mining lease, the lease holder must give each landholder notice in writing:</p> <p>(i) that this mining lease has been granted or renewed; and</p> <p>(ii) whether the lease includes the surface.</p> <p>The notice must include a plan identifying the lease area and each landholder and individual land parcel within the lease area.</p> <p>(b) If there are ten or more landholders to which notice must be given, the lease holder will be taken to have complied with condition 1(a) if a notice complying with condition 1(a) is published in a newspaper circulating in the region where the lease area is situated</p>	Yes	The 2019 renewal application was approved 12 May 2023. The Company notified Hunter Water Corporation and Donaldson Coal of the renewal on 26 May 2023.
2	<p>Security</p> <p>The lease holder is required to provide and maintain a security deposit to secure funding for the fulfilment of obligations under the mining lease, including obligations under the mining lease that may arise in the future.</p> <p>The amount of the security deposit to be provided has been assessed at \$3,576,000.</p>	Yes	The required security deposit has been established. A revised RCE was submitted as part of the Annual Rehabilitation Report and Forward Program.
3	<p>Cooperation Agreement</p> <p>The lease holder must make every reasonable attempt, and be able to demonstrate its attempts to the satisfaction of the Secretary, to enter into a cooperation agreement with the holder(s) of any overlapping authorisations issued under the Mining Act 1992 and petroleum titles issued under the Petroleum (Onshore) Act 1991. The cooperation agreement should address but not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• access arrangements</li> <li>• operational interaction procedures</li> <li>• dispute resolution</li> <li>• information exchange</li> <li>• well location</li> <li>• timing of drilling</li> <li>• potential resource extraction conflicts; and</li> <li>• rehabilitation issues.</li> </ul>	Not Applicable	There are currently no overlapping authorisations with other Companies.
4	<p>Assessable Prospecting Operations</p> <p>(a) The lease holder must not carry out any assessable prospecting operation on land over which this lease has been granted unless:</p> <p>(i) it is carried out in accordance with any necessary development consent; or</p> <p>(ii) if development consent is not required, the prior written approval of the Minister has been obtained.</p> <p>(b) The Minister may require the lease holder to provide such information as required to assist the Minister to consider an application for approval.</p> <p>(c) An approval granted by the Minister under this condition may be granted subject to terms.</p> <p>(d) The lease holder must comply with the approval granted to the holder under this condition.</p>	Yes	No assessable prospecting operations occurred during the reporting period.

**Table A3.2 (Cont'd)**  
**Mining Lease 1461 – Compliance Review**

Page 2 of 3

Cond. No.	Requirement	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>SPECIAL CONDITIONS</b>			
5	<p>Aboriginal Place or Relic</p> <p>The lease holder shall not knowingly destroy, deface or damage any Aboriginal place or relic within the subject area except in accordance with an authority issued under the National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974, and shall take every precaution in drilling, excavating or disturbing the land against any such destruction, defacement or damage.</p>	Yes	No Aboriginal places or relics were disturbed during the reporting period.
6	<p>Dams Safety – Mining Leases</p> <p>(a) The lease holder must not mine within any part of the lease area which is within the notification area of the Stoney Pinch Reservoir Dam without the prior written approval of the Minister and subject to any conditions the Minister may stipulate.</p> <p>(b) Where the lease holder desires to mine within the notification area, the lease holder must:</p> <p>(i) at least twelve (12) months before mining is to commence or such lesser time as the Minister may permit, notify the Minister of the desire to do so. A plan of the mining system to be implemented must accompany the notice; and</p> <p>(ii) provide such information as the Minister may direct.</p> <p>(c) The Minister must not, except in the circumstances set out in sub-paragraph (ii), grant approval unless sub-paragraph (i) of this paragraph has been complied with.</p> <p>(i) This sub-paragraph is complied with if:</p> <p>(a) Dams Safety NSW as constituted by section 6 of the Dams Safety Act 2015 and the owner of the dam have been notified in writing of the desire to mine referred to in paragraph (b).</p> <p>(b) the notifications referred to in clause (a) are accompanied by a description or plan of the area to be mined.</p> <p>(c) the Secretary has complied with any reasonable request made by Dams Safety NSW or the owner of the dam for further information in connection with the mining proposal.</p> <p>(d) Dams Safety NSW has made its recommendations concerning the mining proposal or has informed the Minister in writing that it does not propose to make any such recommendations; and</p> <p>(e) where Dams Safety NSW has made recommendations the approval is in terms that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- in accordance with those recommendations; or</li> <li>- where the Minister does not accept those recommendations or any of them - in accordance with a determination under sub-paragraph (ii) of this paragraph.</li> </ul>	Yes	No mining activities occurred during the reporting period.

**Table A3.2 (Cont'd)**  
**Mining Lease 1461 – Compliance Review**

Page 3 of 3

Cond. No.	Requirement	Compliance	Comments/Notes
<b>SPECIAL CONDITIONS</b>			
6 cont'd	<p>(ii) Where the Minister does not accept the recommendations of Dams Safety NSW or where Dams Safety NSW has failed to make any recommendations and has not informed the Minister in writing that it does not propose to make any recommendations, the approval shall be in terms that are, in relation to matters dealing with the safety of the dam:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- as determined by agreement between the Minister and the Minister administering the Dams Safety Act 2015; or</li> <li>- in the event of failure to reach such agreement - as determined by the Premier.</li> </ul> <p>(d) The Minister, on notice from Dams Safety NSW, may at any time or times:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) cancel any approval given where a notice pursuant to section 19 of the Dams Safety Act 2015 is given.</li> <li>(ii) suspend for a period of time, alter, omit from or add to any approval given or conditions imposed.</li> </ul>		
<b>EXPLORATION REPORTING</b>			
Note:	<p>Exploration Reports (Geological and Geophysical)</p> <p>The lease holder must lodge reports in accordance with the requirements in section 163C of the Mining Act 1992 and clauses 59, 60 and 61 of the Mining Regulation 2016 as well as any further requirements issued by the Secretary under clause 62 of the Mining Regulation.</p> <p>Guidelines for the structure, content and data format requirements for reports are set out in the Exploration Reporting: A guide for reporting on exploration and prospecting in New South Wales.</p>	Yes	The 2023-2024 exploration report was lodged 14/06/2024 (as part of an approved group report).

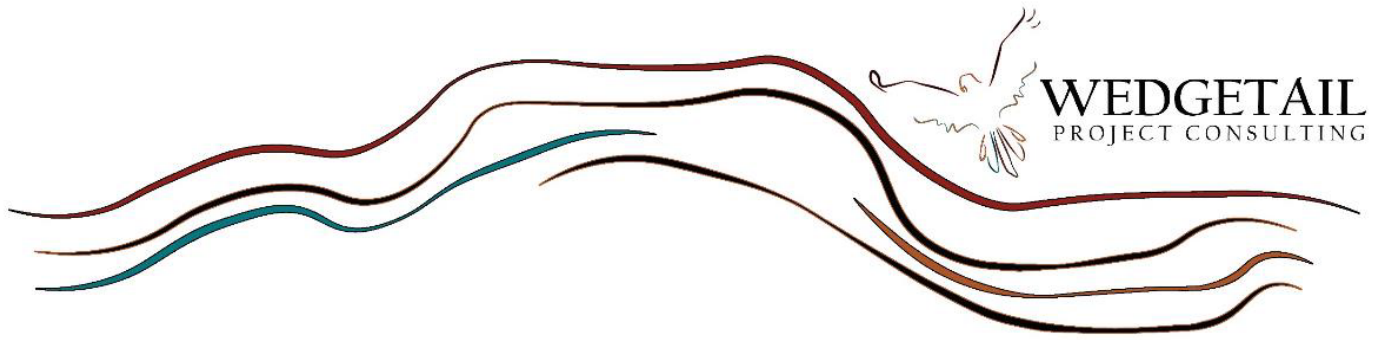
# Appendix 4

## 2023 Annual Flora & Fauna Monitoring and 2024 Annual Winter Monitoring

prepared by

Wedgetail Project  
Consulting Pty Ltd

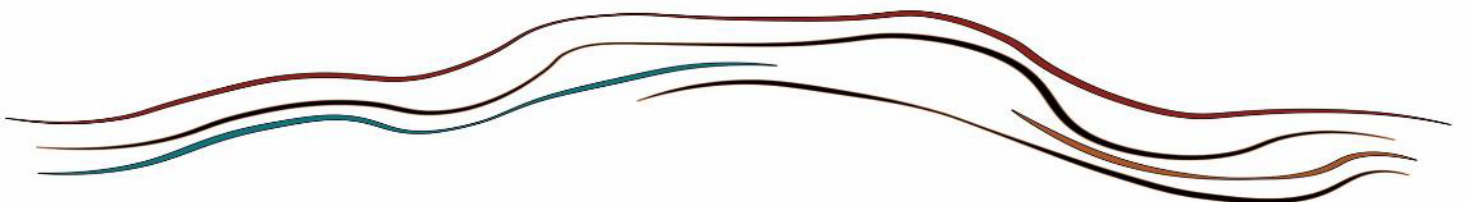
(Total No. of pages including blank pages = 95)



# 2023 Annual Flora and Fauna Monitoring Donaldson Open-Cut Coal Mine, Beresfield, NSW



Rev 1  
21 March 2024



## 2023 Annual Flora and Fauna Monitoring Donaldson Open-Cut Coal Mine, Beresfield, NSW

### REPORT PREPARED FOR:

Yancoal Australia Ltd  
1132 John Renshaw Drive  
Black Hill, NSW, 2322

### REPORT PREPARED BY:

#### WEDGETAIL PROJECT CONSULTING PTY LTD

27 Groves Road  
Bennett's Green, NSW 2290

ABN: 93 640 388 683

*File Ref: WPCDonaldsonF&FQuads\_2023-2024\_Final*

#### Version Control

Rev. No.	Revision Date	Author / Position	Reviewer	Details
Rev 1	14 March 2023	Jake Mauger Ecologist	Nigel Fisher Senior Ecologist	Draft for client review
Rev 1	21 March 2024	Jake Mauger Ecologist	Nigel Fisher Senior Ecologist	Final

Only Yancoal Australia Ltd, its designated representatives or relevant statutory authorities may use this document and only for the specific purpose for which this submission was prepared. It should not be otherwise referenced without permission.





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Findings of the 2023 annual quadrat monitoring survey are presented in this document in accordance with Section 5.1 Monitoring Program of the Donaldson Coal Flora and Fauna Management Plan (F&FMP). Data collected biannually since 2001 have been analysed in order to investigate trends in the flora and fauna species composition over time.*

*The 2023 flora survey results show that floristic diversity and cover of ground cover species has increased since 2019 across most quadrats. This is likely indicative of early stages of recovery following the end of drought conditions including below average rainfall and higher mean maximum temperature recorded in 2019.*

*An overall increase in plant species richness and structural components has been recorded since the baseline survey in 2001. This trend is indicative of a dynamic plant community with high recruitment from the seed pool, normally an indicator of a healthy, regenerating native plant community. While the species composition recorded in each quadrat has changed slightly over the entire survey period, the number of species identified within each quadrat has remained relatively consistent over time.*

*All biomass variables examined (i.e., basal area, height, foliage projective cover (FPC) and stand volume), have shown consistent increases since the baseline survey. The regression analyses confirmed that the relationship between time and increases to stand volume were highly significant indicating that the community biomass has increased substantially across time with no significant year-to-year variation. The regression analyses of FPC shows a slight downward trend although the cover has significantly increased since the baseline surveys except for Q6 which was impacted by Myrtle rust in previous years.*

*The 2023 survey detected a total of 75 fauna species consisting of 43 bird, four arboreal and five terrestrial mammals, 15 bat, five amphibian and three reptile species. Six bat species and one bird species detected are listed as vulnerable under the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (BC Act). The 2023 fauna survey results demonstrate a significant decrease in species richness compared to the previous 3 years.*

*Nest box surveys in 2023 (summer average) saw 56% (Summer) of all available boxes showing signs of use (both actual animals present and evidence of usage). Nest box utilisation has remained constant from previous years (winter and summer average of 38.5% in 2023). This is potentially due to 15 nest boxes being replaced (which often experience low utilisation immediately after installation) and three nest boxes requiring maintenance. It is expected that the usage rate will increase in coming years as fauna become acclimatised to the boxes.*

*Overall results conclude that there has been minimal impact to floristic and fauna diversity within the Donaldson Bushland Conservation Area (BCA) over the last 20 years. Fluctuations in ecological diversity across all quadrats have been observed which are consistent with natural ecosystem functioning, weather patterns and the changing nature of the adjoining habitat, resulting from past mining activities and neighbouring development.*

## Contents

<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 COMPLIANCE WITH THE F&FMP	1
1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	2
<b>2. METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 FLORA SURVEY	4
2.1.1 Vegetation Communities	4
2.1.2 Floristic Identification and Nomenclature	4
2.1.3 Biomass	6
2.2 FAUNA SURVEY	7
2.2.1 Terrestrial and Arboreal Mammal Trapping	7
2.2.2 Microbat Trapping	7
2.2.3 Microbat Call Detection	8
2.2.4 Owl Call Playback	8
2.2.5 Spotlighting	8
2.2.6 Bird Surveys	8
2.2.7 Nest Box Monitoring	8
2.3 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS	8
2.3.1 Flora	8
2.3.2 Fauna	9
<b>3. RESULTS</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1 WEATHER	10
3.2 VEGETATION COMMUNITIES	13
3.3 BIOMASS	18
3.3.1 Foliage Projective Cover	18
3.3.2 Basal Area	18
3.3.3 Total Stand Volume	18
3.3.4 Biomass Trends	19
3.4 FLORISTICS	23
3.5 FAUNA	27
3.5.1 Mammals	28
3.5.2 Herpetofauna	32
3.5.3 Birds	33
3.5.4 Nest Box Monitoring	37
<b>4. DISCUSSION</b>	<b>39</b>

4.1	VEGETATION .....	39
4.1.1	Myrtle Rust.....	39
4.2	FAUNA.....	40
4.3	NEST BOXES .....	41
<b>5.</b>	<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>RECOMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>44</b>

## Figures

Figure 1:	Extent of the Donaldson Open-cut coal mine and the location of the nine permanent monitoring quadrats.....	3
Figure 2:	Vegetation communities surrounding Donaldson Open-cut coal mine.....	5
Figure 3:	Total foliage projective cover for each quadrat between 2001 and 2023.....	19
Figure 4:	Basal area for each quadrat between 2001 and 2023.....	20
Figure 5:	Average tree height for each quadrat between 2001 and 2023.....	20
Figure 6:	Total stand volume for each quadrat between 2001 and 2023.....	21
Figure 7:	Total FPC (%) for combined quadrats across time (2001-2023). R-squared values from linear regression analysis displayed.....	22
Figure 8:	Total stand volume (m <sup>3</sup> /ha) for combined quadrats across time (2001-2023). R-squared values from linear regression analysis displayed.....	23
Figure 9:	Cumulative species count since the baseline (2001) survey event.....	24
Figure 10:	Total fauna species recorded across all years (2001 – 2023).....	27
Figure 11:	nMDS analysis of all fauna species detected in all quadrats 2001 – 2023 (excluding 2002 – 2004) .....	28
Figure 12:	Total mammal species recorded at each survey event 2001 – 2023.....	29
Figure 13:	nMDS analysis of arboreal mammal species detected in all quadrats 2001 – 2023. ...	30
Figure 14:	nMDS analysis of terrestrial mammal species detected in all quadrats 2001 – 2023...	31
Figure 15:	nMDS analysis of bat species detected in all quadrats 2001 – 2023.....	32
Figure 16:	Number of amphibian and reptile species recorded within all quadrats over time.....	33
Figure 17:	Total number of bird species recorded in all quadrats 2001 – 2023 (excluding 2002 - 2004).....	34
Figure 18:	The cumulative bird species count since the baseline (2001) survey event.....	35
Figure 19:	nMDS analysis of bird species detected in all quadrats 2001 – 2023 (excluding 2002 – 2004) .....	36
Figure 20:	Number of birds per guild from 2005-2023.....	36
Figure 21:	The proportion of nest boxes utilised in winter and summer between 2006 and 2023.	37
Figure 22:	Nest box usage, summer and winter combined (2006 – 2023). Usage rates are calculated based on available boxes.....	38
Figure 23:	Number of available nest boxes over time (2005 - 2023).....	38

## Tables

Table 1:	Monthly and annual average maximum temperatures for Maitland Visitors Centre (2001-July 2016) and Maitland Airport (August 2016 onwards).....	10
Table 2:	Monthly and yearly rainfall (mm) totals and totals for Maitland Visitors Centre (2001 – July 2016) and Maitland Airport (August 2016 onwards).....	12
Table 3:	Summary of vegetation communities occurring at Quadrats 1-9 .....	14
Table 4:	Sorensen’s Similarity Index for all pair-wise comparisons between quadrats 1-9 determined from the presence/absence data for all plant species recorded during the baseline flora survey.....	25
Table 5:	Sorensen's Similarity Index for Quadrats 1-9, comparing species composition from baseline (2001 for Q1-Q8; 2003 for Q9), 2007, and 2015, as well as the previous and current surveys. Values for quadrats may range between 0 (no species present at both survey periods) to 1.0 (all species present in both surveys). .....	26

## Plates

Plate 1:	Example of grid layout for collection of biomass measurements (Quadrat 5) .....	7
Plate 2:	Glossy Black-Cockatoos ( <i>Calyptorhynchus lathami</i> ) .....	62
Plate 3:	Sugar Glider nest in new nest box .....	62
Plate 4:	Gould’s Long-eared Bat ( <i>Nyctophilus gouldii</i> ) .....	63
Plate 5:	Southern Myotis ( <i>Myotis macropus</i> ).....	63
Plate 6:	Red-backed Toadlet ( <i>Pseudophryne coriacea</i> ).....	64
Plate 7	Diamond Python ( <i>Morelia spilota</i> ) .....	65

## Appendices

Appendix A:	PLANT SPECIES RECORDED IN THE BASELINE (2001), 2022 AND 2023 SURVEY EVENTS .....	46
Appendix B:	MAMMAL SPECIES RECORDED 2001-2023.....	52
Appendix C:	BIRD SPECIES RECORDED ACROSS ALL QUADRATS DURING 2001 & 2005-2023 SURVEYS.....	54
Appendix D:	AMPHIBIAN AND REPTILE SPECIES RECORDED ACROSS ALL QUADRATS 2009 - 2023 .....	57
Appendix E:	CLUSTER ANALYSIS DENDOGRAMS AND SIMPROF RESULTS .....	59
Appendix F:	PHOTOS - FAUNA.....	62
Appendix G:	STAFF CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS.....	66

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Yancoal Australia Ltd operated Donaldson Coal Open Cut Mine from 2001 until 2013, when operations ceased due to the exhaustion of resources. Donaldson Coal is located on a mining lease near Beresfield in the Lower Hunter Valley, NSW (**Figure 1**). As part of the Conditions of Consent, a Flora and Fauna Management Plan (F&FMP) was prepared prior to the commencement of operations (Gunninah 2000) with subsequent revisions made by Ecobiological in 2007 and Donaldson Coal in 2019 (Donaldson Coal 2019).

The F&FMP prescribes the approach and the frequency of monitoring of the remnant bushland surrounding the mine disturbance area, referred to hereafter as the Bushland Conservation Area (BCA). Regular monitoring activities are conducted at nine permanently established 20 m x 20 m quadrats positioned across the mining lease (**Figure 1**). A Baseline Report (Barker Harle 2001) was prepared at the commencement of mining activities and each year since, to monitor the impact of mining activities on flora and fauna at the mine.

This report provides a comparison of flora and fauna species richness and composition, as well as several specific vegetation parameters over time to determine potential impacts of mining activities at Donaldson Coal on flora and fauna in the BCA. Statistical analyses were conducted to detect significant patterns in any data set that was deemed comprehensive enough to pick up significant trends or changes overtime. Due to the adaptive nature of the monitoring program, including changes to methodologies and to the intensity of survey effort over time, not all data sets were considered to be comprehensive, only relevant data was analysed and discussed.

### **1.1 COMPLIANCE WITH THE F&FMP**

The nine permanent quadrats were established in accordance with Section 5.1 Monitoring Program in the F&FMP. One of the permanent quadrats was to be established downstream of the mine in Woodbury Swamp, however this location was not situated within Donaldson Coal's mining lease. In consultation with the Donaldson Environmental Officer (EO) it was decided not to establish this quadrat. In 2003 Quadrat 9 was established in an area of bushland of similar type to that originally found over the pit area.

The monitoring program was to include a quarterly assessment of:

- Condition and type of vegetation and fauna habitat.
- Flora and fauna species list and the Braun-Blanquet cover scale of each plant species within a quadrat; and
- Proximity of the quadrat to the mine site and other areas having the potential to affect the quality of the vegetation.

The Baseline Report (Barker Harle 2001) prepared to fulfil part of the requirements of Section 5.0 of the F&FMP provides a detailed discussion of the program requirements. During initial discussions with the Donaldson EO, it was decided that the program requirements could be met by a very detailed annual assessment and a quarterly general inspection of each quadrat for any significant change. In 2004, winter fauna monitoring methods were changed from trapping to artificial nest box inspection.

The change was implemented as a result of poor trapping results and the high risk of mortality to captured animals from cold exposure.

Reporting requirements outlined in Section 6.1 of the F&FMP include the following:

Pre-clearing Verification Reports and Clearing Verification Reports prepared for bushland to be cleared as mining and associated activities require.

Both the Pre-clearing Verification Reports and the Clearing Verification reports were prepared.

Monitoring reports which are provided biannually and summarise all monitoring activities carried out in the preceding six months and brief monitoring reports to be provided following each monitoring event.

In order to meet Condition 13(1) of the Conditions of Consent a six-monthly environmental monitoring report should be provided to the stakeholders. A six-monthly fauna report was provided.

## **1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The aim of the monitoring program is to assess the diversity and abundance of flora and fauna species at a temporal and spatial scale across the BCA.

The long-term objectives of the program include:

- Monitor flora and fauna present on the BCA on an annual basis through targeted surveys.
- Document and report annually on the flora and fauna present on the BCA.
- Document and report changes in species diversity and floristic composition of flora on the site.
- Document and report changes in stand volume and biomass parameters.
- Provide recommendations that will assist in the management of flora and fauna species.
- Make recommendations that will contribute to minimising mine disturbance on the remnant vegetation around the mine site; and
- Determine the temporal impacts of mining operations on the ecological attributes of the BCA.



Created by: KBlundell  
Date: 28.07.2023



<https://wedgetail.com.au>

**Legend**

- ▭ Donaldson Coal Mine Disturbance (Pit) Area
- ▭ Subject Site
- ▣ Quadrat Locations

**Extent of Donaldson Open Cut Mine & the Location of Nine Permanent Monitoring Quadrats**

Donaldson Coal  
John Renshaw Drive  
Black Hill NSW

Figure:

**1**



## **2. METHODOLOGY**

Field surveys are conducted annually from late spring to early summer (October – December). Field survey methods are summarised below. More detailed information regarding survey methodologies is available in the Baseline Report (Barker Harle 2001). Nest boxes are inspected twice a year, once in winter and again in late spring/summer.

### **2.1 FLORA SURVEY**

Eight permanent 20 m x 20 m (0.04 ha) monitoring quadrats (Quadrats 1-8) were established in 2001 across the Donaldson coal mine property (**Figure 1**). An additional quadrat (Quadrat 9) was established in 2003. These quadrats are permanently marked with star pickets to allow precise replication of the measurement of floristic structure, content, and biomass on an annual basis.

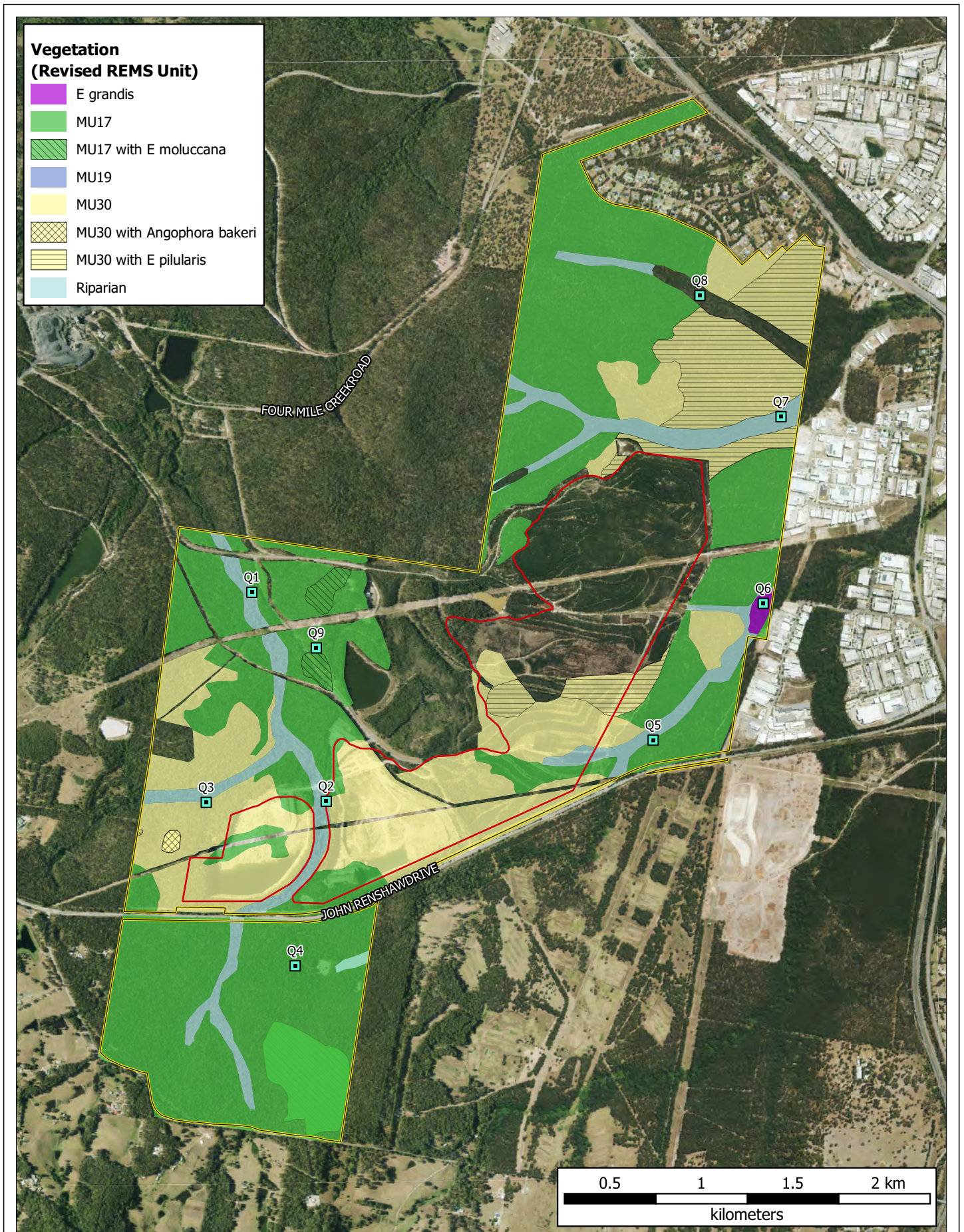
#### **2.1.1 Vegetation Communities**

The vegetation communities present within the BCA, as confirmed by ecobiological (2004), are presented in (**Figure 2**). Each quadrat was classified according to its vegetation type (i.e., dominant association). Brief descriptions on the condition and structure of each vegetation community are provided in Section 3.2.

#### **2.1.2 Floristic Identification and Nomenclature**

Floristic identification and nomenclature were based on Harden (1992, 1993, 2000 and 2002) with subsequent revisions as published on PlantNET (<http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au>). If a plant was unable to be identified using these references, a sample was sent to the National Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney, NSW.





**Vegetation (Revised REMS Unit)**

- E grandis
- MU17
- MU17 with E moluccana
- MU19
- MU30
- MU30 with Angophora bakeri
- MU30 with E pilularis
- Riparian

Created by: KBlundell  
Date: 09.03.2023



**WEDGETAIL**  
PROJECT CONSULTING

<https://wedgetail.com.au>


**Legend**

- Donaldson Coal Mine Disturbance (Pit) Area
- Subject Site
- Quadrat Locations

**Vegetation Communities Surrounding Donaldson Coal Open Cut Mine**

Donaldson Coal  
John Renshaw Drive  
Black Hill NSW

Figure:  
**2**



## 2.1.3 Biomass

### 2.1.3.1 Foliage Projective Cover

Foliage Projective Cover (FPC) is described as the horizontal spread of the foliage of all the vegetation covering any area and is a measure of the total photosynthetic respiratory surface over that area (Specht 1983; Specht & Specht 1999). A system for classifying structure of vegetation communities is detailed in Specht & Specht (1999). This method allows for precise and repeatable comparison of plant communities. An example of this classification technique can be found in Le Brocq & Buckney (1997).

Foliage Projective Coverage (FPC) was measured in each quadrat. Methods used were adapted from Specht (1981) and Specht (1983). FPC was recorded for canopy species and for groups of species making up the shrub and ground cover. The spread of foliage was measured on a 1 m by 1 m grid, set out with measuring tapes and recorded on grid paper. Vegetation layers included ground cover, shrubs ( $\leq 2$  m), overstorey and emergent trees. **Plate 1** shows an example (Quadrat 5) of the grid layout with measuring tapes for each quadrat.

All vegetation covering the quadrat was recorded, including plants with overlapping foliage inside the quadrat and bases located outside. A vertical sighting device adapted from the crosswire sighting device described by Winkworth and Goodall (1962) was used to determine the position of overhead foliage. The outline of each predominant species or group of species foliage was established by walking the foliage perimeter and at specific points recording the locations from the tape measures onto grid paper. These points were then joined to give polygons representing FPC.

### 2.1.3.2 Basal Area

The location of individual shrub and tree stems was recorded on grid paper to allow temporal comparisons. Trees taller than two metres had their girth measured at 1.4 m above the ground. The girth was used to assess the Diameter at Breast Height (DBH). Trees over two metres also had their height measured with a Hagl6f digital hypsometer.

Basal area was determined for all trees over two metres tall. The total basal area and total basal area of each species in the quadrats was determined. The basal area was calculated using the below equation:

Basal area  $m^2 = a^2 \div 4\pi$ , where girth (a) in metres is measured at 1.4 m high.

### 2.1.3.3 Total Stand Volume

Total stand volume was calculated from basal areas and tree heights. The below equation was used:

• Total stand volume  $m^3/ha = (b \div 0.04ha) \times (c \div 3)$ , where (b) is basal area in  $m^2$  and (c) is tree height in metres.

Research has shown that there is a relationship between the growth of one part of an organism and another part that is known as allometric growth or allometry (where a part is a constant exponential function of the whole). The relationship between the basal area of a tree and the height can be used to monitor the development of the trees within the quadrats over time.



**Plate 1: Example of grid layout for collection of biomass measurements (Quadrat 5)**

## **2.2 FAUNA SURVEY**

Field surveys were conducted in accordance with the revised F&FMP (Ecobiological 2007). Early surveys followed a methodology designed around the observation of fauna species within the 20 m x 20 m quadrats. This method proved inadequate to accurately assess fauna species richness. The revised field survey methodologies are summarised below.

### **2.2.1 Terrestrial and Arboreal Mammal Trapping**

Terrestrial and arboreal trapping was undertaken at Quadrats 1, 2, 3,4 and 9 on 11<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and at Quadrats 5, 6, 7 and 8 on 4-8<sup>th</sup> December 2023. Trapping was conducted within a 300-metre radius of each quadrat. Trapping effort spanned four nights and employed 20 Elliott A, three Elliott B and three cage traps set on the ground and five Elliott B traps set about two metres above the ground, mounted on the trunks of trees. Traps were checked each morning.

### **2.2.2 Microbat Trapping**

Since 2004, one harp trap per quadrat has been used for four nights total trapping effort. These are used in addition to microbat call detection, as not all species can be identified by echolocation calls alone.

### **2.2.3 Microbat Call Detection**

One Anabat™ Express bat detector (Titley Scientific, Lawnton, Qld) per quadrat was used to undertake passive monitoring of bats flying or foraging within each quadrat. Detectors were set up at dusk when bat activity is highest, and recording occurred for one hour on one night.

### **2.2.4 Owl Call Playback**

Calls of four threatened owl species (Powerful Owl, Sooty Owl, Masked Owl, and Barking Owl) were broadcast by loudspeaker in the area of each quadrat after dusk. Each species' call was played for a 2-3-minute period followed by quiet listening for approximately 10 minutes.

### **2.2.5 Spotlighting**

Spotlighting was undertaken from dusk for at least one-person hour (i.e., one observer for an hour or two observers for 30 minutes) in the area of each quadrat to detect the presence of nocturnal fauna species.

### **2.2.6 Bird Surveys**

A two-hectare area centered on each quadrat was searched by one observer for 30 minutes and all birds detected were identified either visually with the aid of binoculars, or by call interpretation. Surveys were conducted in the early morning when bird activity is highest.

### **2.2.7 Nest Box Monitoring**

Forty-five nest boxes were originally installed in 2005. Nest boxes are inspected twice a year, once in winter and again in late spring/summer. Evidence of usage is determined through either direct detection of animals at the time of the visit or indirect evidence such as recent chew marks, hair, or leaf nests.

## **2.3 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS**

### **2.3.1 Flora**

Data for FPC and stand volume (a derivative of basal area and tree height) for flora survey quadrats from 2001 to 2023 were analysed to determine whether the plant communities were increasing in biomass over time and undergoing succession towards a mature plant community structure (Specht & Specht 2002, pp 28-41). An increase in these parameters over time is taken as an indicator of plant community health and viability, in addition to other measures such as species diversity and richness. The analysis was undertaken using a linear regression model, with time as the explanatory variable. R<sup>2</sup> values were also calculated to determine how well the fitted lines explained the data. The closer the R<sup>2</sup> value is to 1, the higher confidence that the trend line fits the data.

Similarity indices were calculated for all pairs of quadrats in the baseline survey to determine the level of floristic similarity between the different plant communities surveyed across the quadrats. Similarity indices were also calculated for each quadrat between two different monitoring events (i.e., 2001 vs 2002), to determine changes in floristic composition at each quadrat over time. The index used was Sorensen's Similarity Index (Krebs, 1999, p. 377) computed as  $SI = 2a / (2a + b + c)$  where a = the number of species present in both quadrats, b = the no. of species presents in only one quadrat of a pair, and c = no. of species presents in only the second quadrat of a pair. Quadrat pairs

with a low index (minimum possible = 0; no species in common) share fewer species in common, and pairs with a higher index share more species in common (maximum possible = 1.00 where all species recorded in the pair of quadrats are present in both).

## **2.3.2 Fauna**

Data on fauna species detected between 2001 and 2023 were analysed to determine changes in species richness and diversity over time. Non-metric Multidimensional Scaling (nMDS) and cluster analysis were undertaken to explore the relationship between fauna species assemblages detected in different sample years. The Primer-E software program was used with the Kulczynski Similarity Index for presence only data (Clarke and Gorley, 2006). This analysis produced scatterplots which depict, in 2-dimensional space, the similarity between species assemblages of different survey years. Associated dendrograms were also produced that graphically depict the relationship between sample years.

The strength of any clusters apparent in the scatterplot were tested by running a similarity profile routine (SIMPROF) over branches in the dendrogram. Solid black lines in the dendrogram indicate statistically significant differences between clusters at the 95% confidence level. Broken red lines link clusters that are not significantly different. The results of the SIMPROF analysis are shown in **Appendix E**.

Single factor Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine if there was a significant difference between nest box usage in summer and winter with all years combined. Percentages were arcsine transformed before analysis.

### 3. RESULTS

#### 3.1 WEATHER

Monthly temperature and rainfall data from 2001-2023 are presented in **Table 1** and **Table 2**. Data was accessed from the Bureau of Meteorology weather station at Maitland Visitors Centre (BOM station ID 061388, 2016) up until July 2016, when this station closed. For the remainder of the year, data was collected from Maitland Airport (BOM station ID 061428). Average monthly and annual figures are used to derive overall climatic trends.

Monthly average maximum temperatures for 2023 are higher than the average maximum temperatures for each month over the 20 years, excluding August. The annual rainfall recorded in 2023 was below the average of all the previous years (2001 – 2022). February recorded the highest monthly rainfall in 2023 (137.4 mm) and May recorded the lowest (12.4 mm).

**Table 1: Monthly and annual average maximum temperatures for Maitland Visitors Centre (2001-July 2016) and Maitland Airport (August 2016 onwards)**

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual Mean
2001	31.4	29.8	25.9	24.8	19.8	19.5	18.2	19.7	23.2	25.4	25.4	29.3	24.4
2002	30	27.1	27.2	24.8	20.6	18.6	18.8	20.6	24	28.3	29.6	28.9	24.9
2003	29.9	29.1	26.2	23.3	20.7	20	18.2	19.7	23.9	23.3	26.2	28.7	24.1
2004	31.5	31.5	26.8	25.5	21.9	19.7	18.5	20.4	23.3	24.8	27.4	28.2	25
2005	30.2	30	25.8	26	21.1	19	19	20.6	22	26.1	27.1	32.8	25
2006	31.6	31.4	28.2	25.7	21.3	18.1	18.2	20.3	23.7	26.2	28.5	28.2	25.1
2007	31.6	30.1	28.7	24.3	23.1	16.9	17.3	20.8	22.8	28.5	26.7	27.6	24.9
2008	28.5	26.1	27.1	22.7	21.4	19.1	17.8	18.3	23.2	25.4	25.4	29	23.7
2009	31.2	29.5	27.9	23.5	21.1	18.9	18.3	22.4	24.6	24.2	30	28.7	25
2010	31.4	30	28.1	25.8	21.4	18.3	17.7	18.5	22.6	23.8	26.2	28.5	24.4
2011	30.8	31.4	28.5	23.6	20.2	18.5	17.5	20.5	23.3	23.9	27.6	24.6	24.2
2012	28.2	27.1	26.4	23.9	21.3	18.1	17.6	20.3	24.4	25.8	27.7	29.2	24.2
2013	30.9	27.8	27.6	25.2	21.4	18.1	19.3	21.7	26.6	28.4	26.6	29.1	25.2
2014	30	28.1	27.9	25.1	22.8	19.1	18.5	19.1	22.8	27.8	29.8	-	24.6
2015	30	29	30	24	21	19	18	20	22	28	28	30	24.9
2016	29.3	30.7	30.3	26.9	24.1	18.8	17.2	19.4	21.8	24.7	29.6	31.6	25.4
2017	32.8	33.2	27.2	23.9	21.4	18	19.1	20.2	25.5	26.8	25.8	31.8	25.5
2018	33.3	31.4	28.5	26.5	21.7	17.4	19.6	20.0	22.3	24.1	27.3	31.3	25.3
2019	35.2	31.9	29.6	25.8	22.3	18.8	19.5	20.7	23.7	27.2	31.2	33.0	26.5
2020	32.7	29.3	26.0	25.0	20.0	18.6	17.8	18.8	23.0	25.6	29.4	27.4	24.4
2021	29.0	27.3	25.9	23.8	21.1	17.7	17.7	20.9	23.6	25.5	24.3	28.4	23.8
2022	29.7	28.2	26.1	24.6	20.9	17.5	17.2	19.8	21.2	24.0	25.8	27.6	23.55
2023	29.4	31.0	29.8	24.0	20.8	19.1	19.8	21.6	25.9	27.6	27.8	30.1	25.58

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual Mean
<b>Monthly Mean</b>	29.4	29.5	27.5	24.7	21.3	19.3	18.2	20.1	23.3	24.7	27.5	30.3	24.73

Source: Bureau of Meteorology. (-) indicates no temperature data available.

**Table 2: Monthly and yearly rainfall (mm) totals and totals for Maitland Visitors Centre (2001 – July 2016) and Maitland Airport (August 2016 onwards)**

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Ave Mon	Ann Tot
2001	20	128	170	74	145	5	51	21	15	28	76	59	66	792
2002	26	247	103	61	44	29	25	13	25	10	51	106	62	740
2003	11	75	59	77	107	16	30	43	0	53	125	61	55	657
2004	90	166	74	38	20	10	28	31	49	172	71	89	70	838
2005	-	141	141	22	120	65	12	1	43	68	61	21	63	695
2006	28	55	106	31	12	58	65	50	157	6	-	45	56	613
2007	21	57	86	55	44	392	23	-	-	24	-	-	88	702
2008	-	170	35	213	4	121	38	19	178	83	97	70	93	1028
2009	8	234	50	164	70	62	23	2	26	66	33	58	66	796
2010	66	48	75	22	73	111	62	32	20	60	192	63	69	824
2011	37	38	48	140	92	160	87	57	76	105	142	157	95	1139
2012	84	174	102	79	12	125	45	14	22	7	46	45	63	755
2013	141	134	79	67	51	80	30	12	17	51	365	16	87	1043
2014	21	86	115	81	30	45	22	111	31	50	22	164	65	778
2015	155	41	35	358	80	42	15	38	57	44	102	135	92	1102
2016	405	35	26	26	7	114	7	-	71	48	44	95	80	878
2017	74	59	181	57	22	95	1	7	11	93	28	55	57	683
2018	10	103	182	35	6	78	1	15	49	108	78	43	59	708
2019	30	28	156	13	18	62	20	47	49	16	12	1	38	452
2020	38	204	118	28	44	55	107	24	34	87	32	156	77	927
2021	98	117	269	29	28	43	13	52	29	68	205	36	82	986
2022	95.2	112	277	79.8	68.2	9.8	162	38.0	91.6	109	48.6	31.4	94	1124
2023	100	137	109	58.4	12.4	10.6	19.0	43.8	15.6	42.4	59.6	7.6	51	616
<b>Mean</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>816</b>

Source: Bureau of Meteorology. (-) Indicates no rainfall data available.



## 3.2 VEGETATION COMMUNITIES

Four vegetation communities (ecobiological 2004) have been mapped across the Donaldson Coal BCA. Also, present are some variants within each of these communities. Of note is the “riparian zone” as indicated in **Figure 2**. These areas should be regarded as being of a similar vegetation type to the surrounding vegetation, albeit with some floristic differences associated with minor gullies.

These vegetation communities are listed below:

- Tall Moist Forest with *E. grandis*.
- Riparian Moist Forest.
- Spotted Gum Communities.
- Spotted Gum with *E. moluccana*;
- Hunter Lowland Redgum Forest.
- Smooth-barked Apple Forest.
- Smooth-barked Apple Forest with *A. bakeri*.
- Smooth-barked Apple Forest with *E. pilularis*.

The Lower Hunter Central Coast Regional Environmental Management Strategy (LHCCREMS) (NPWS 2000) mapping for the BCA maps large areas as the endangered MU 17 – Lower Hunter Spotted Gum Ironbark Forest. Ground-truthing of the BCA by ecobiological (2004) confirmed the identity of this ecological community as most consistent with MU 16 Seaham Spotted Gum – Ironbark Forest. The following account was given in the analysis by ecobiological (2004):

“The Spotted Gum data from Donaldson was compared with 126 other sites from the Central Coast and Hunter region using both cluster analysis (PATN) and non-metric Multi-Dimensional Scaling (nMDS). The analysis indicates that there are five probable Spotted Gum community types across the region, and that the Spotted Gum vegetation at Donaldson is more closely related to the Seaham Spotted Gum – Ironbark Forest than the Lower Hunter Spotted Gum – Ironbark Forest. From this analysis, it would appear that the Lower Hunter Spotted Gum – Ironbark Forest is restricted to the area immediately around Cessnock and that the Quorrobolong Valley vicinity marks the transition from Seaham Spotted Gum – Ironbark Forest to Coastal Foothills Spotted Gum – Ironbark Forest.”

Some sites show distinct riparian characteristics which makes them very different from the surrounding vegetation (Quadrat 1 and Quadrat 2), referred to as “Riparian Moist Forest”. The characteristics of this vegetation are summarised below (Ecobiological 2004).

“A range of sites extending from Clarence Town to the Holgate Ranges near Gosford support a moist forest type which has been tentatively termed here Hunter Valley Moist Forest. However, NPWS (2000) do not map this community south of Quorrobolong Valley, but sites from Gosford and Wyong fall within this group. There may be some overlap with some of the other moist forest communities defined by NPWS (2000), but further clarification is beyond the scope of this report. Two riparian sites from within Donaldson Coal occur within this group.”

Brief descriptions of the vegetation communities occurring at each quadrat and a summary of key vegetation parameters are provided in **Table 3**. Note that some vegetation layers have changed their cover considerably over the 20 years of monitoring and only 2023 data is provided in this table.

**Table 3: Summary of vegetation communities occurring at Quadrats 1-9**

Quadrat	Veg Community	Rev'd REMS Unit	Dominant Overstorey Species	Midstory/ Shrub Cover (%)	Ground cover (%)	Overall Condition
1	Riparian Moist Forest	-	<i>Backhousia myrtifolia</i> <i>Corymbia maculata</i> <i>Syncarpia glomulifera</i> <i>Angophora costata</i> <i>Eucalyptus umbra</i>	0%	10%	The vegetation at Q1 was identified as being in moderately good condition because of groundcover remaining low at 10%. A total of 45 plant species were identified in 2023 which is twelve species more than that recorded in 2022. No weed species were identified or any other forms of land degradation (i.e., erosion). Some dieback was noted in select <i>Eucalyptus umbra</i> individuals.
2	Riparian Moist Forest	-	<i>Backhousia myrtifolia</i> <i>Corymbia maculata</i> <i>Eucalyptus acmenoides</i> <i>Glochidion ferdinandi</i> <i>Syncarpia glomulifera</i>	5%	75%	The vegetation at Q2 was identified as being in good condition this year due to the continued high percentage of ground cover carried on from 2022, likely due to an increase in rainfall. A total of 47 plant species were identified in 2023 which is a 5 species increase from the previous year (42 species). Species richness in 2023 still remains below that recorded between 2006 and 2018. The ground cover slightly increased from 70% in 2022 to 75% in 2023. The shrub layer cover has remained the same as the 2020 survey. <i>Lantana camara</i> has occurred in low densities within the quadrat since the baseline surveys were conducted in 2001. The occurrence of this species has increased between the 2022 and 2023 monitoring events, likely due to favourable conditions e.g., high rainfall. Despite this, most the individuals are juvenile and occupy little space within the quadrat.
3	Smooth-barked Apple Forest	MU 30	<i>Angophora costata</i> <i>Eucalyptus fibrosa</i> <i>Eucalyptus umbra</i> <i>Melaleuca styphelioides</i> <i>Syncarpia glomulifera</i>	22%	25%	The vegetation at Q3 was identified as being in good condition. A total of 46 plant species were identified in 2023, a significant decrease from the number recorded in 2022 (49 species). The ground layer cover has remained 25%. The shrub layer canopy cover has declined substantially over the previous two years. <i>L. camara</i> continues to be present.

Qua d	Veg Community	Rev'd REMS Unit	Dominant Overstorey Species	Midstory/ Shrub Cover (%)	Ground cover (%)	Overall Condition
4	Spotted Gum – Ironbark Forest	MU 17	<i>Corymbia maculata</i> <i>Eucalyptus acmenoides</i> <i>Eucalyptus fibrosa</i>	7%	80%	The vegetation at Q4 was identified as being in good condition. A total of 45 plant species were identified in 2023 which is a slight decrease from 48 species recorded in 2022. The ground layer cover increased to 80% in 2023 from a low of 35% in 2019. The shrub layer cover remained relatively stable at 7%. One weed species was identified in 2023, <i>Hypochaeris radicata</i> (Catsear).
5	Spotted Gum – Ironbark Forest	MU 17	<i>Corymbia maculata</i> <i>Eucalyptus acmenoides</i> <i>Eucalyptus siderophloia</i> <i>Syncarpia glomulifera</i>	1%	85%	The vegetation at Q5 was identified as being in good condition. A total of 37 plant species were identified in 2023, which is a significant decrease of eight species compared to that recorded in 2022. The ground cover has slightly increased from 80% to 85% between the 2022 and 2023 monitoring events, suggesting the vegetation is recovering from the dry conditions in 2019. The groundcover in 2021 is now comparable to that recorded in 2018 (75%). The shrub cover remains low in 2023 similar to 2022. A greater abundance of the exotic species, <i>Lantana camara</i> and <i>Senecio Madagascariensis</i> was present within the quadrat during the 2023 survey, likely in response to favourable conditions.
6	Tall Moist Forest with <i>Eucalyptus grandis</i>	-	<i>Cryptocarya microneura</i> <i>Eucalyptus acmenoides</i> <i>Eucalyptus grandis</i> <i>Syncarpia glomulifera</i> <i>Melaleuca styphelioides</i> <i>Melicope micrococca</i>	5%	95%	The vegetation at Q6 was identified as being in moderately good condition. A total of 47 plant species were identified in 2023 which is which has remained constant from the 2022 monitoring event. The ground cover has increased from 85% to 95% in 2023. The shrub cover result in 2023 (5%) is slightly increased to that recorded in 2022. Three weed species were identified in the 2023 survey: <i>Tradescantia fluminensis</i> , <i>Solanum mauritianum</i> and <i>L. camara</i> . <i>T. fluminensis</i> remains the dominant ground cover species <i>L. camara</i> occurs along the edge of the quadrat along the creek line. Whilst targeted spraying of

Quad	Veg Community	Rev'd REMS Unit	Dominant Overstorey Species	Midstory/ Shrub Cover (%)	Ground cover (%)	Overall Condition
						large stands of <i>L. camara</i> adjacent to Q6 was undertaken in the past, regrowth is now occurring in these areas and requires follow-up control for effective long-term management.
7	Smooth-barked Apple Forest with <i>Eucalyptus pilularis</i>	MU 30	<i>Angophora costata</i> <i>Eucalyptus pilularis</i> , <i>Glochidion ferdinandi</i> <i>Melaleuca linariifolia</i> <i>Eucalyptus acmenoides</i> <i>Allocasuarina torulosa</i>	29%	60%	The vegetation at Q7 was identified as being in good condition. A total of 49 plant species were identified in 2023, remaining constant as the previous monitoring event (2022). The ground cover significantly decreased from 80% (2020) to 60% (2021). The weed species <i>L. camara</i> has occurred within the site since 2001. Midstorey vegetation has remained stable at 29% as observed in 2023. Targeted spraying of large stands of <i>L. camara</i> adjacent to Q7 was undertaken previously. The spraying has been effective within the quadrat although other large patches remain along the creek line.
8	Hunter Lowland Redgum Forest	MU 19	<i>Corymbia maculata</i> <i>Eucalyptus punctata</i> <i>Eucalyptus siderophloia</i> <i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> <i>Melaleuca linariifolia</i> <i>Melaleuca styphelioides</i>	19%	85%	The vegetation at Q8 was identified as being in good condition. A total of 60 plant species were recorded in 2023, a decrease compared to 69 plant species identified in 2022, an increase of two species. The recorded ground cover has remained stable at 85% in 2022, maintaining the pre-drought returning to levels recorded in 2018. The shrub layer coverage slightly reduced this year compared to the 2019 surveys, from 21% to 19%. Three weed species, <i>L. camara</i> , <i>Ochna serrulata</i> , <i>Paspalum dilatatum</i> was recorded in 2022 compared one weed species of <i>L. camara</i> in 2021 survey. Targeted spraying of <i>L. camara</i> adjacent to Q8 was undertaken in previous years which appears to have been effective in controlling most of the large stands.
9	Spotted Gum – Ironbark	MU 30	<i>Corymbia maculata</i>	5%	95%	The vegetation at Q9 was identified as being in moderately good condition. A total of 56 plant species

Qua d	Veg Community	Rev'd REMS Unit	Dominant Overstorey Species	Midstory/ Shrub Cover (%)	Ground cover (%)	Overall Condition
	Forest with <i>Eucalyptus moluccana</i>		<i>Eucalyptus fibrosa</i> <i>Eucalyptus umbra</i> <i>Eucalyptus punctata</i> <i>Eucalyptus moluccana</i>			were identified in 2023 compared to 38 in 2022 which is a sharp increase of 28 species. The ground cover has remained stable at 95% during 2022 returning to levels recorded in 2018. The shrub layer cover has remained stable at 5% during 2022 survey Three weed species, <i>L. camara</i> , <i>Conyza sp.</i> , <i>Hypochoeris radicata</i> was recorded in 2023,

### 3.3 BIOMASS

#### 3.3.1 Foliage Projective Cover

Each quadrat has shown an increase in FPC when compared to the baseline survey results. However, there has been a general decline in FPC since the highest levels were recorded in 2012/2013, with most quadrats recording a decrease in FPC between the years of 2015 to 2017 (**Figure 3**). The 2023 FPC results are mixed, with five quadrats recording a small increase (Q1, Q2, Q6, Q8 and Q9) and others recording a small decrease in FPC (Q3, Q4, Q5 and Q7).

Fluctuations in FPC are likely to be a result of one or a combination of factors:

- Observer variation, where no noticeable canopy dieback or fallen limbs were observed.
- Dieback of canopy and shrub species.
- Wilting of midstorey species, decrease of ground cover and species diversity due to the impact of the drought, with recent increases indicating the early stages of recovery.
- The lack of fire or an inappropriate fire regime for the ecological community over time will decrease the density and diversity of species.

In 2014, *Rhodomyrtus psidioides* seedlings were recorded in Quadrat 6. Most of these seedlings were observed to be infected with a rust fungus (most likely Myrtle Rust). By 2016, the mature trees of this species had completely died, and only one small seedling was observed within the quadrat. No *R. psidioides* were recorded during the current survey (2023) in Quadrat 6 or in any of the additional quadrats. No evidence of Myrtle Rust was observed.

#### 3.3.2 Basal Area

Basal area in 2023 has generally increased since baseline surveys (2001 for Quadrats 1-8; 2009 for Quadrat 9), with basal area increasing across Quadrats 3,4,5 in 2023, however Quadrats 1,2,6,7,8 and 9 displayed a slight decrease in basal area (**Figure 4**).

Minor decreases in basal area recorded in quadrat Q9 of *C. maculata* are likely the result of bark shed (hence reduction in tree girth).

A noticeable reduction in tree height between 2003 and 2004 may be attributable to the change in methodology associated with the use of the Hypsometer.

#### 3.3.3 Total Stand Volume

Total stand volume (derived from height and basal area measurements) has increased by an average of 119.82 m<sup>3</sup>/ha across the quadrats since the initial monitoring event in 2001 (2003 for Quadrat 9) (**Figure 6**). All quadrats besides Quadrats 3 and 5 recorded an increase in total stand volume in 2023 compared to 2022. The minor changes in total stand volume recorded in 2023 do not represent a significant change in forest condition, instead it is likely the result of changes in basal areas (as discussed in Section 3.3.2), along with the influence adding additional small trees to quadrats has on average height data.

The total stand volume has been presented in this report instead of the average stand volume which was used prior to 2012. The use of total stand volume allows for the recruitment and addition of new trees in the quadrats without lowering the values.

### 3.3.4 Biomass Trends

Despite minor year-to-year fluctuations in these vegetation parameters, overall positive trends in growth have been observed for all quadrats from the baseline survey to the current survey. The protection of remnant bushland surrounding the pit area from a history of logging, clearing, frequent fire, firewood collection and rubbish dumping has likely contributed to the overall increase in biomass at all quadrats between the baseline survey and current survey year.

Vegetation parameters are presented graphically in **Figure 3** through to **Figure 6**. The raw data for tree height, foliage cover, basal area and stand volume recorded at each quadrat from the baseline (2001/2003) through to 2023.

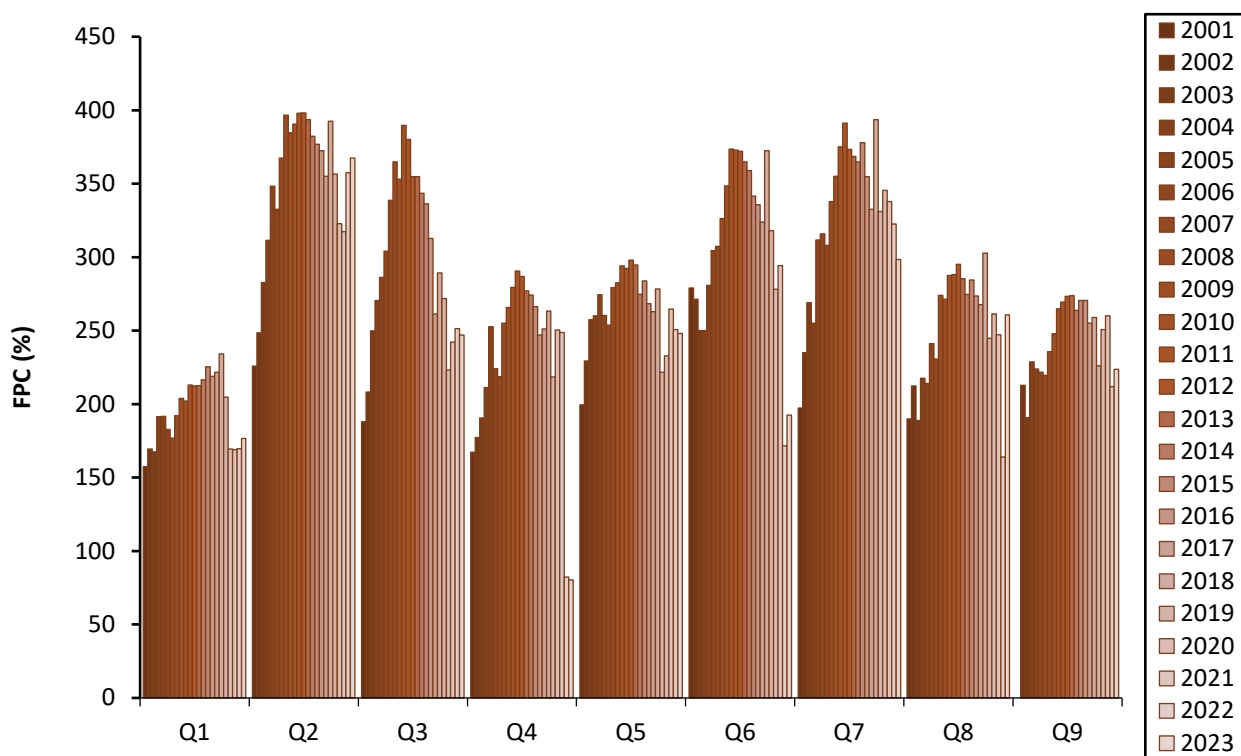
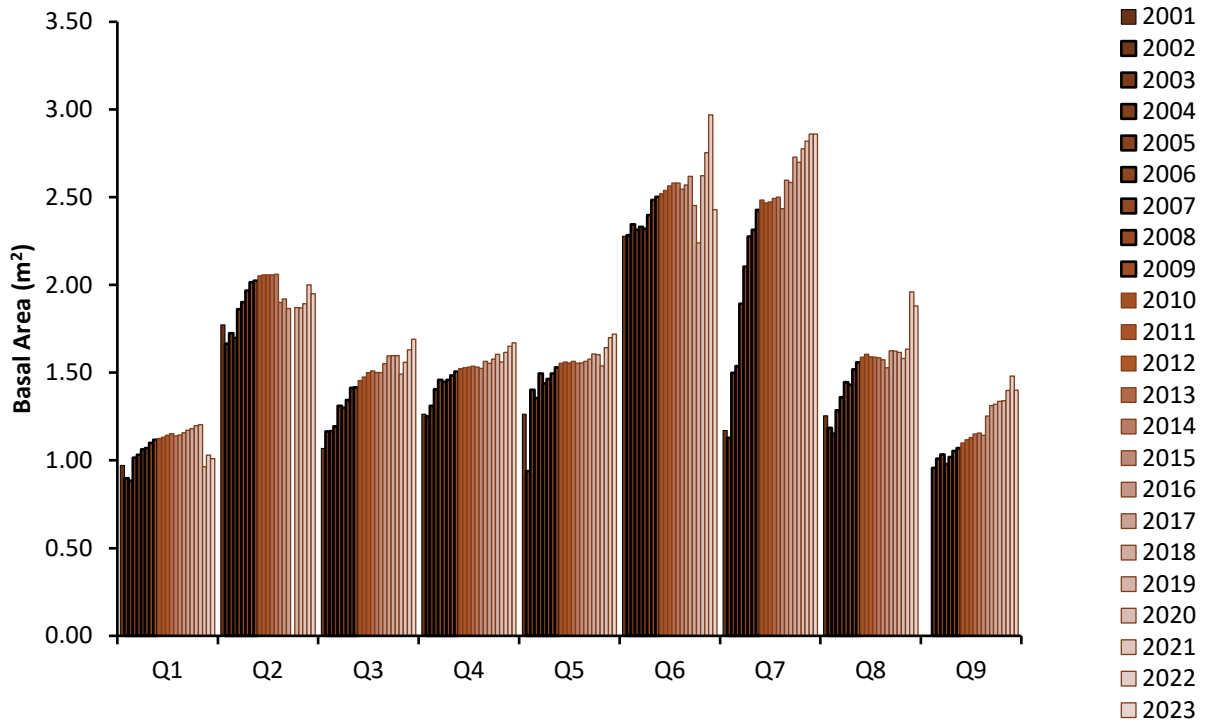
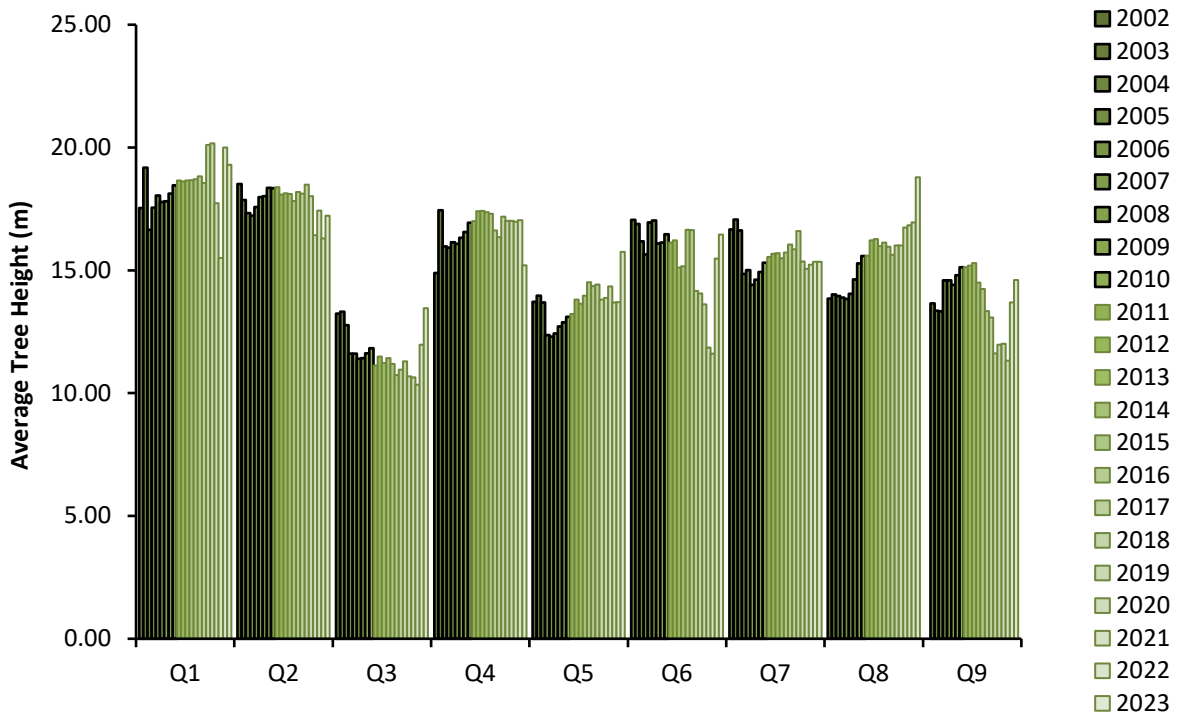


Figure 3: Total foliage projective cover for each quadrat between 2001 and 2023.

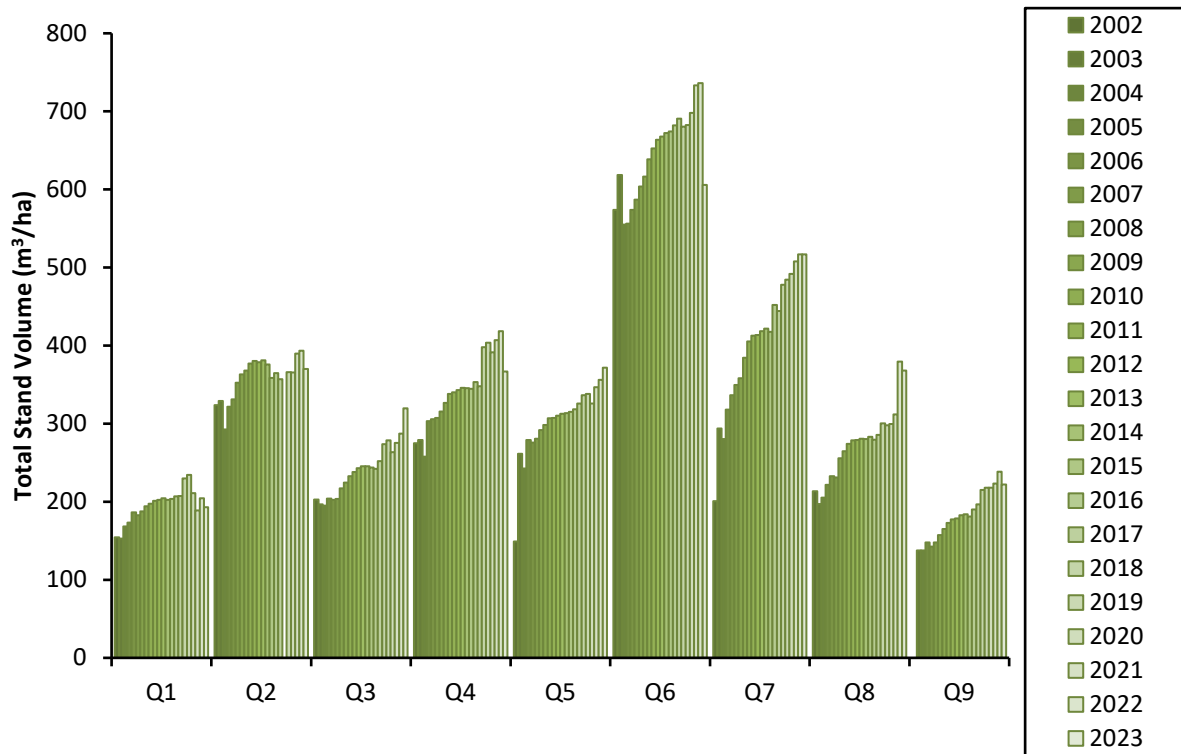


**Figure 4: Basal area for each quadrat between 2001 and 2023.**



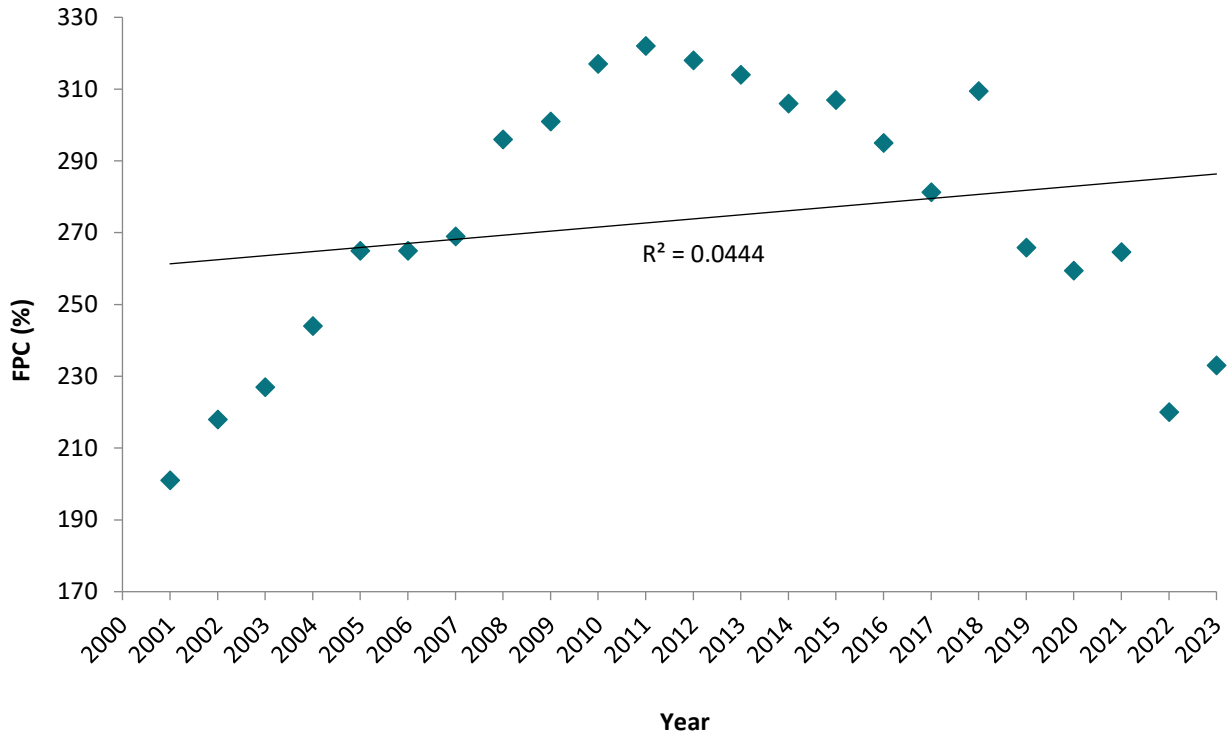
**Figure 5: Average tree height for each quadrat between 2001 and 2023**





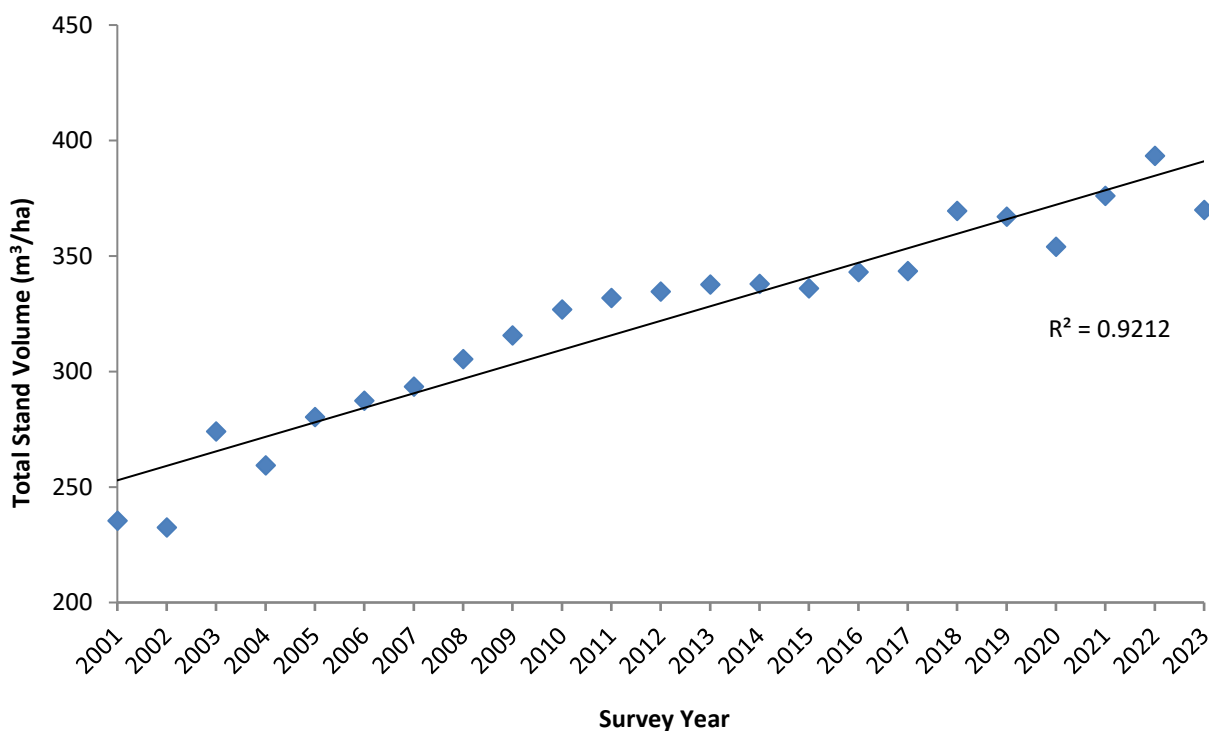
**Figure 6: Total stand volume for each quadrat between 2001 and 2023.**

Linear regression analysis was performed for all quadrat data to assess the relationship between biomass measurements (FPC and stand volume) and time. The analysis highlights variations in vegetation growth and development over time, which may be attributed to previous edge effects from mining activities (i.e., dust, weed invasion, changes in hydrology). The analysis indicates that FPC has increased since baseline across all quadrats, except Quadrat 8 which has displayed significant variations in FPC ( $F_{1, 20} = 0.97$ ;  $p = 0.33$ ), although there has been an overall gradual decrease since 2011. The  $R^2$  value has decreased from 0.107 (2022) to 0.04 (2023) which indicates that there has been a slight increase in the variation from previously modelled results (**Figure 7**).



**Figure 7: Total FPC (%) for combined quadrats across time (2001-2023). R-squared values from linear regression analysis displayed.**

The linear regression analysis for stand volume indicates that this parameter has increased significantly over time across all quadrats ( $F_{1, 21} = 245.5$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). The  $R^2$  value is high ( $> 0.92$ ), which indicates that there is little variation in stand volume from year-to-year among the quadrats (**Figure 8**). An overall progressive increase in stand volume since the baseline survey is evident. Some variation may be attributed to the maturation of trees to over 2 m and /or trees dying.



**Figure 8:** Total stand volume (m<sup>3</sup>/ha) for combined quadrats across time (2001-2023). R-squared values from linear regression analysis displayed.

### 3.4 FLORISTICS

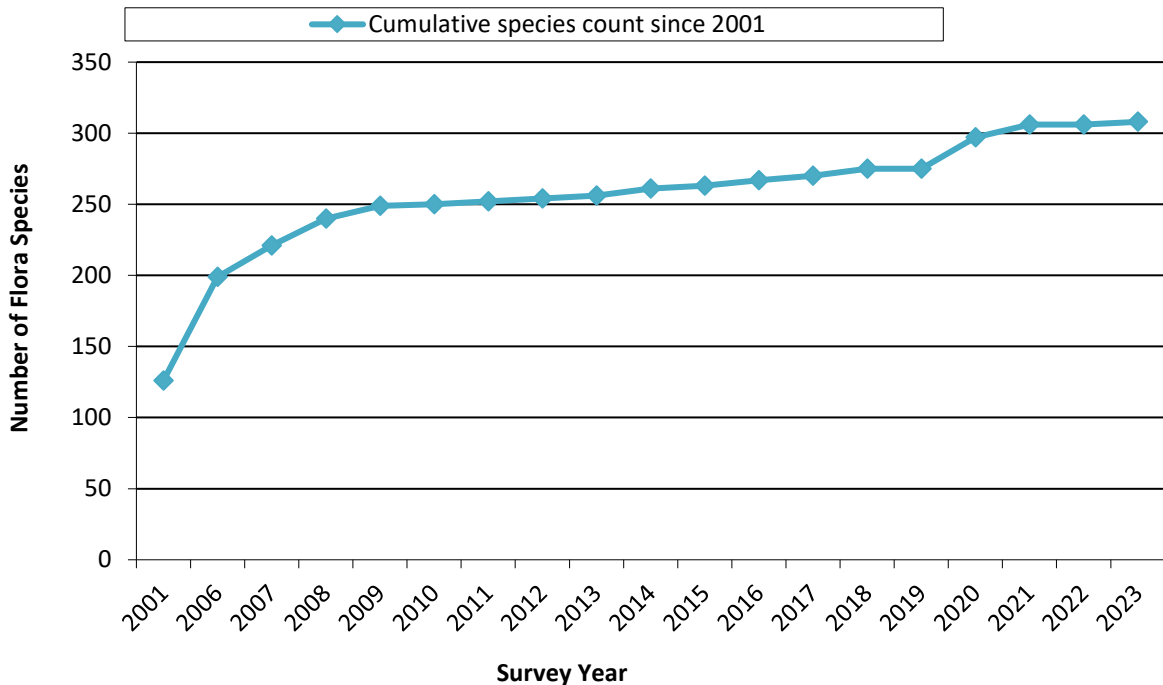
A total of 162 flora species were recorded in 2023, including eight exotic and 154 native species. This represents an increase of 2 species since 2022 (160 species), and an increase of 28 species since the 2001 baseline survey (134 species) (see **Appendix A**).

A total of 308 species have been recorded across all survey events since baseline surveys in 2001. **Figure 9** presents the cumulative number of species recorded since the baseline, illustrating a steady increase in species number until 2009 where numbers levelled off and stabilised through to 2019. The 2023 assessment revealed a stable number of species for the site.

The stabilisation of species numbers recorded over time can be explained by the species-time relationship (STR), which is similar to the pattern observed for species-area relationship (SAR), whereby the species richness of a given plant community being observed typically fits a power or exponential model. The potential number of plant species within a defined area (i.e., a quadrat) is expected to increase substantially over the short-term, and then plateau to an asymptotic maximum value as the time period increases (White et al. 2006; Specht and Specht 2002).

Ecological processes and variables which generally explain the observation of most plant species within the short-term include disturbance events, detectability (i.e., sporadic flowering time, dormancy), and variable climatic conditions such as rainfall. The expected decrease in the cumulative number of observed species richness over a longer time scale is less influenced by short-term variables and affected more by processes such as metapopulation dynamics and successional changes (White et al. 2006). For example, a reasonable proportion of many plant community assemblages consist of dormant/ephemeral species which are only detectable when conditions are suitable for germination, such as post-fire or high rainfall events. The majority of these species are

likely to be detected within the short-term (i.e., within 5 years). The floristic results of the quadrat surveys within the BCA are consistent with this fundamental ecological pattern.



**Figure 9: Cumulative species count since the baseline (2001) survey event.**

Similarity indices were calculated for all pairs of quadrats in the baseline survey to determine how similar in species composition to each other the plant communities were in the quadrats surveyed. The similarity indices are shown in **Table 4**. Values from the baseline survey varied between 0.000 and 0.517 indicating a wide range in the degree of similarity between pairs of quadrats, from pairs with no shared species (Quadrat 6 and Quadrat 9), to pairs with many shared species (i.e., Quadrat 6 and Quadrat 2). This indicates that the nine quadrats sampled capture a wide degree of community and species diversity across the mining lease.

**Table 4: Sorensen's Similarity Index for all pair-wise comparisons between quadrats 1-9 determined from the presence/absence data for all plant species recorded during the baseline flora survey.**

Similarity Index Matrix: Baseline Flora									
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
Q1		0.290	0.427	0.281	0.222	0.207	0.328	0.273	0.310
Q2	0.290		0.160	0.063	0.222	0.517	0.149	0.182	0.103
Q3	0.427	0.160		0.234	0.241	0.113	0.425	0.278	0.423
Q4	0.281	0.063	0.234		0.255	0.033	0.261	0.324	0.367
Q5	0.222	0.222	0.241	0.255		0.146	0.160	0.163	0.195
Q6	0.207	0.517	0.113	0.033	0.146		0.063	0.032	0.000
Q7	0.328	0.149	0.425	0.261	0.160	0.063		0.254	0.222
Q8	0.273	0.182	0.278	0.324	0.163	0.032	0.254		0.419
Q9	0.310	0.103	0.423	0.367	0.195	0.000	0.222	0.419	
Mean	0.292	0.211	0.288	0.227	0.201	0.139	0.233	0.241	0.255
SD	0.068	0.142	0.124	0.119	0.041	0.167	0.112	0.116	0.153
Overall Mean	0.232								
SD	0.125								

Values from 0.3-0.4 highlighted green (moderate similarity); > 0.4 highlighted orange (high similarity).

A comparison of the similarity indices for Quadrats 1-9 between 2001 (2003 baseline for Q9), 2007 and 2015 (i.e., 7- and 15-year intervals), as well as the previous (2021) and current (2023) survey periods are presented in **Table 5**. This analysis was performed on interval data to examine the across-time trends in floristic changes for each quadrat. The analysis shows that generally the similarity of the quadrats has stabilised over time. The comparison between consecutive years shows moderate to high similarity between survey periods, with similarity indices of 0.764 to 1.138 recorded between 2022 and 2023. This represents that a greater change in floristics occurred between 2022-2023 when compared to the previous period of between 2021-2022 (i.e., >0.85 similarity for all quadrats between 2022 and 2023 surveys). This is likely the result of the reappearance of a species as a result of more favourable climatic conditions (i.e., no longer drought conditions).

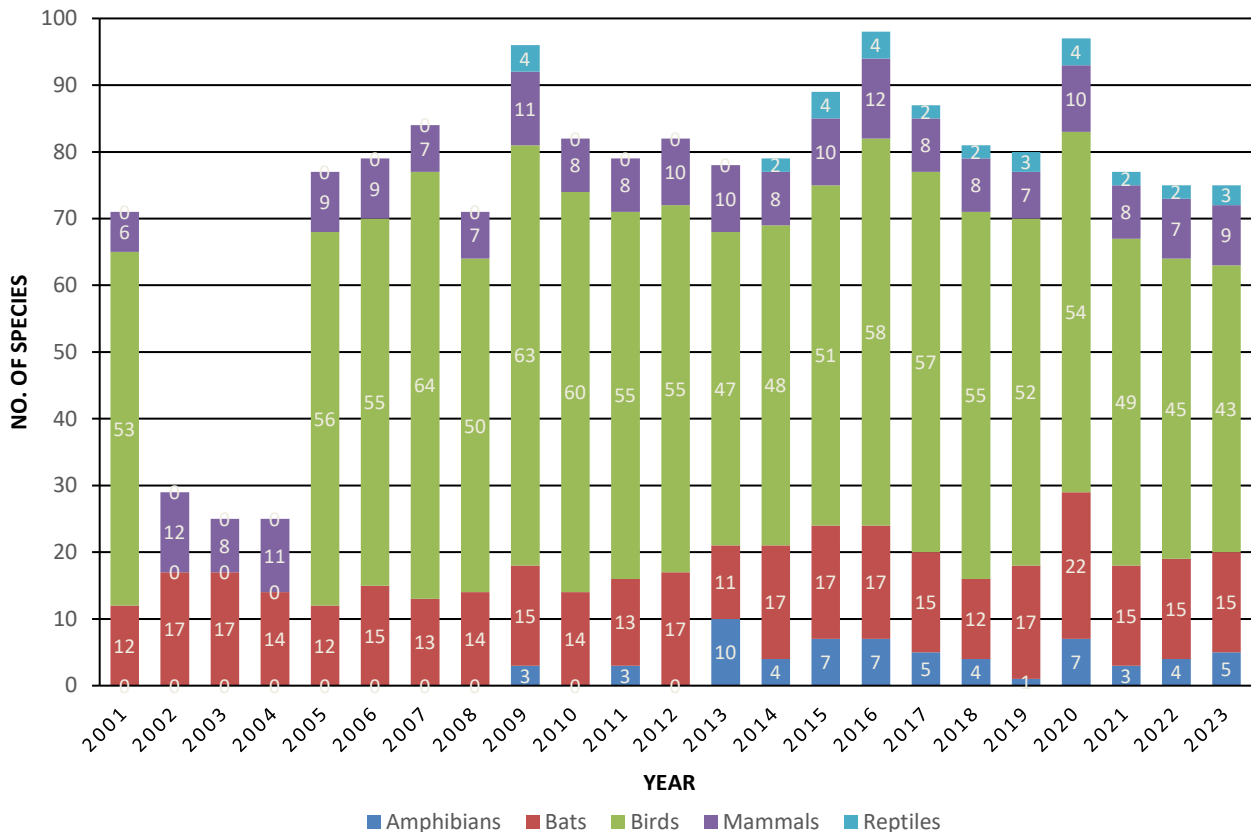
A review of similarity indices from baseline surveys through to 2023 reveal changes in floristics throughout the last 19 years indicative of a dynamic plant community responding to climatic conditions and ecological variables over time. Floristic similarities between baseline and the current assessment indicate that most quadrats have a species composition moderately similar to that in 2001 (2003 for Q9). The lowest similarity was recorded at Q7 which identified a significant reduction in species similarity with only one species present in both baseline and 2023 surveys, whilst a reduction of species similarity in Q1 of six species was observed from baseline to 2023 survey period.

**Table 5: Sorensen's Similarity Index for Quadrats 1-9, comparing species composition from baseline (2001 for Q1-Q8; 2003 for Q9), 2007, and 2015, as well as the previous and current surveys. Values for quadrats may range between 0 (no species present at both survey periods) to 1.0 (all species present in both surveys).**

		Baseline vs '07	2007 vs '15	Baseline vs '15	Baseline vs 2023	2022 vs '23
Q1	No. of sp. present only 1 year	32	22	34	39	17
	No. of sp. present in both years	22	33	20	17	29
	Similarity Index	0.579	0.75	0.541	0.466	0.921
Q2	No. of sp. present only 1 year	45	37	40	31	14
	No. of sp. present in both years	22	40	25	23	37
	Similarity Index	0.494	0.684	0.556	0.597	1.138
Q3	No. of sp. present only 1 year	47	32	51	41	18
	No. of sp. present in both years	27	44	29	25	38
	Similarity Index	0.535	0.733	0.532	0.549	1.027
Q4	No. of sp. present only 1 year	44	28	52	45	15
	No. of sp. present in both years	19	37	17	16	39
	Similarity Index	0.463	0.725	0.395	0.416	1.13
Q5	No. of sp. present only 1 year	39	39	42	33	18
	No. of sp. present in both years	10	28	11	10	33
	Similarity Index	0.339	0.589	0.344	0.377	0.957
Q6	No. of sp. present only 1 year	36	30	40	41	14
	No. of sp. present in both years	17	33	20	17	39
	Similarity Index	0.486	0.688	0.500	0.453	0.848
Q7	No. of sp. present only 1 year	43	30	47	49	15
	No. of sp. present in both years	22	38	22	1	42
	Similarity Index	0.506	0.717	0.484	0.039	0.848
Q8	No. of sp. present only 1 year	40	42	46	63	29
	No. of sp. present in both years	23	33	23	20	47
	Similarity Index	0.535	0.611	0.500	0.388	0.764
Q9	No. of sp. present only 1 year	52	34	50	53	24
	No. of sp. present in both years	16	40	17	14	34
	Similarity Index	0.381	0.702	0.405	0.346	0.829

### 3.5 FAUNA

A total of 180 fauna species have been recorded since monitoring began in 2001, including 12 frog, 18 non-flying mammal, 26 bat, 111 bird and 13 reptile species. Fauna species recorded in 2023 totalled 75, consisting of 43 birds, 15 bat, five terrestrial mammal, four arboreal mammal, five frog and three reptile species (**Figure 10**). Six bat and one bird species are listed as Vulnerable under the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (BC Act). The low numbers observed in 2002, 2003 and 2004 are due to the lack of bird surveys completed in those years.

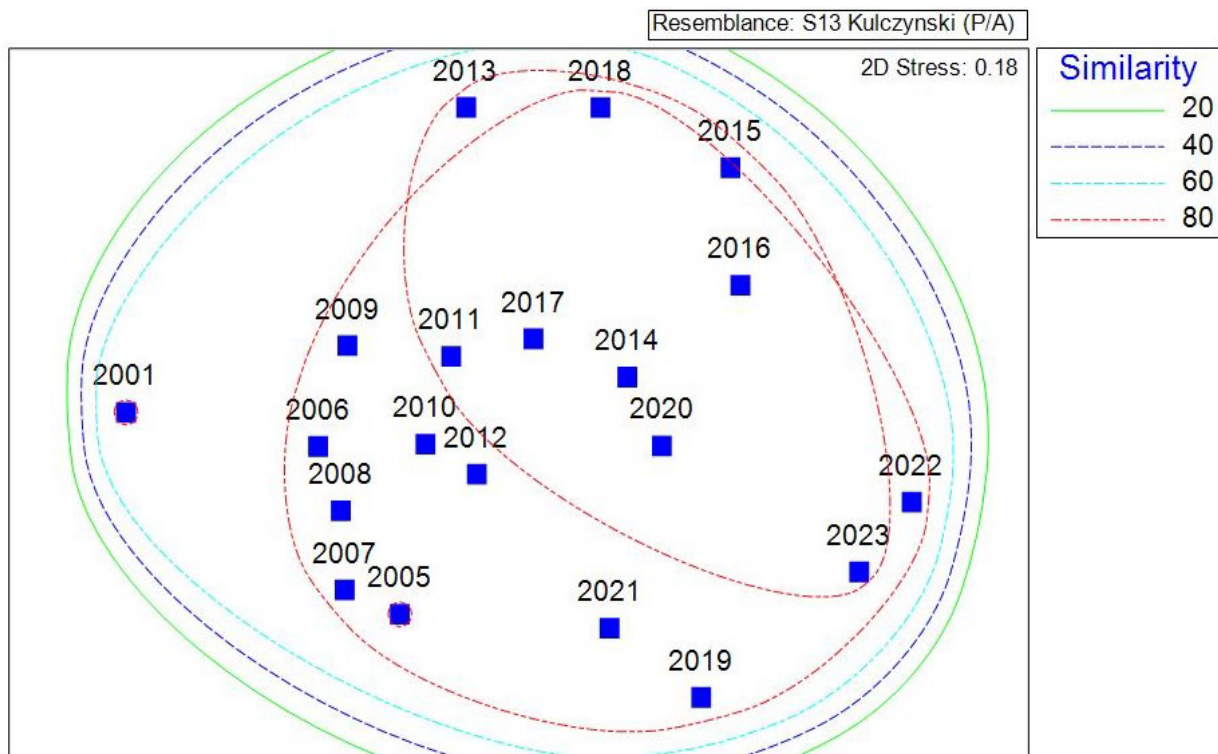


**Figure 10: Total fauna species recorded across all years (2001 – 2023).**

The nMDS analysis (**Figure 11**) illustrates the degree of similarity, across years, for the number of fauna species detected within each survey period.

Fauna assemblages for all year's show at least 68% similarity. The SIMPROF test (**Figure 11 and Appendix E**) showed that the greatest similarity of fauna assemblages exists between years 2010 and 2011 (83%). This year's results (2023) show that it is statistically similar the previous year (2022) of monitoring although statistical different from all other years with the greatest similarity to 2016 and 202 years (75%). This small difference between 2022 and 2023 is likely to be due to differences in the composition of bird species detected. This is discussed in greater detail in Section 3.5.1.4.

It should also be noted that a hazard reduction burn was undertaken within the very northern portion of the BCA (within the vicinity of Quadrat 8). All ground vegetation was burnt ensuring that all large trees and the flora quadrat was avoided. The burn was undertaken following fauna surveys in 2020. The reduction burn has the potential to influence fauna occurrence in the coming years.

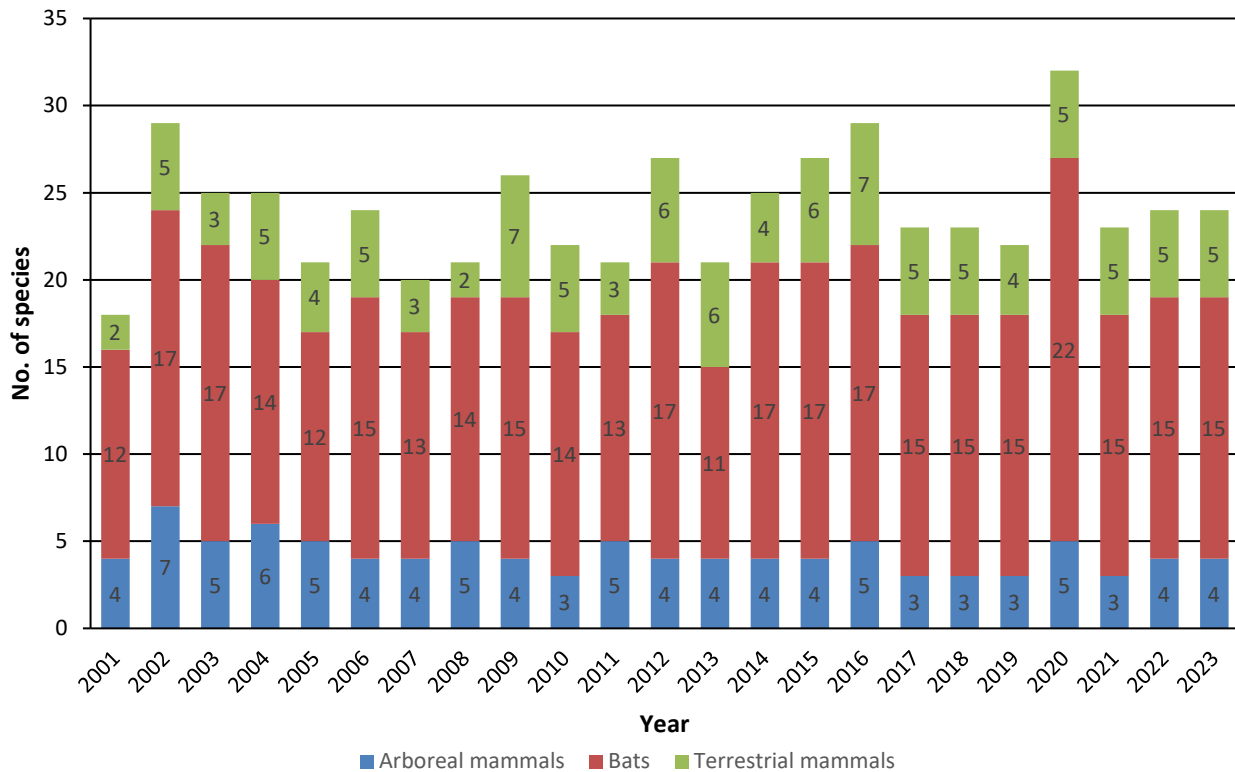


**Figure 11: nMDS analysis of all fauna species detected in all quadrats 2001 – 2023 (excluding 2002 – 2004)**

### 3.5.1 Mammals

A total of 24 mammal species were detected during the 2023 surveys, comprising 14 microbats, one megabat, five terrestrial species and four arboreal species. Six of the bat species detected were listed under the BC Act. The number of mammals detected during the current survey (24) is equal to the yearly average of 24 species across all survey years (**Figure 12**). During the 2023 surveys one introduced pest species were detected the Black Rat (*Rattus rattus*).





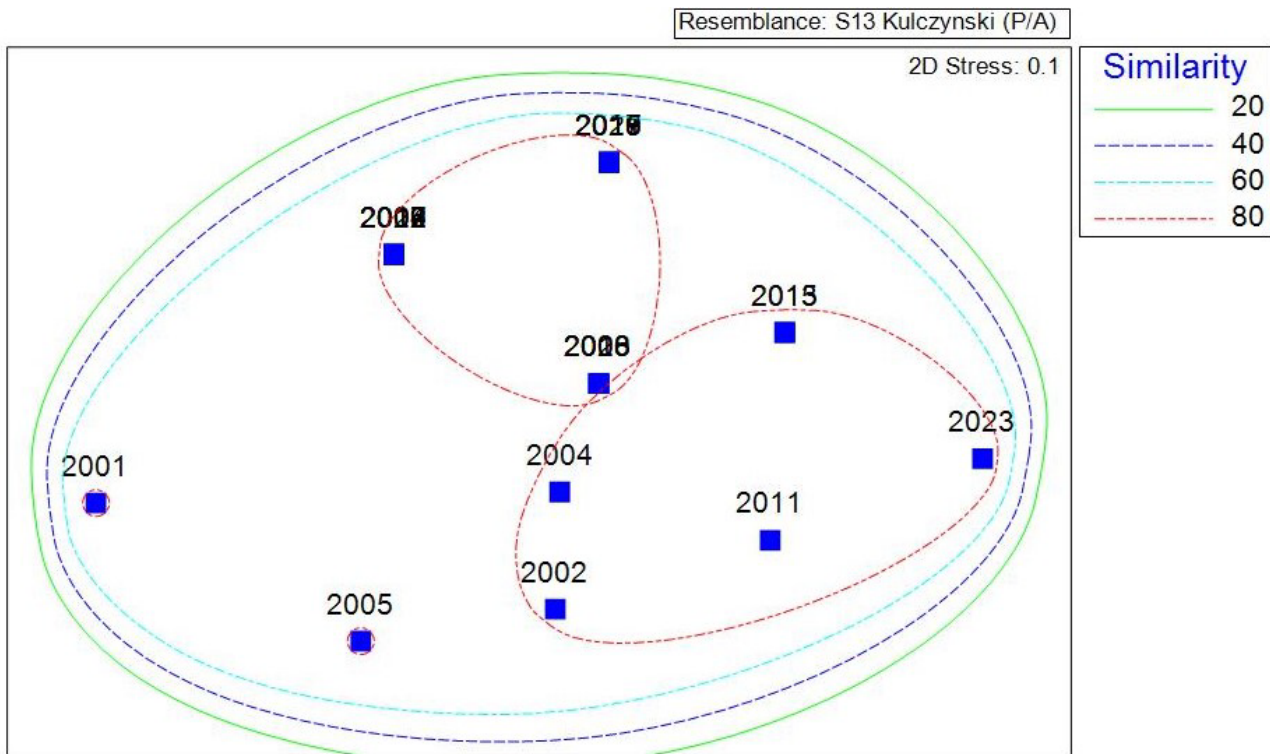
**Figure 12: Total mammal species recorded at each survey event 2001 – 2023.**

A list of all mammal species detected from 2001-2023 is provided in **(Appendix B)**. To investigate trends in species assemblages across the years, mammals were categorised for analysis into arboreal species, highly mobile flying species (Chiroptera or bats) and terrestrial species.

### 3.5.1.1 Arboreal Mammals

During the 2023 fauna surveys, four species of arboreal mammal were detected (**Figure 12**), which is approximately equal to the yearly average (4.35 species). The arboreal mammals detected included Sugar Glider (*Petaurus breviceps*) recorded during all survey periods except for 2001, as well as the Brown Antechinus (*Antechinus stuartii*) and the Common Brushtail Possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*), which have been detected every year. Additionally, the Feathertail Glider (*Acrobates pygmaeus*) was observed, which has not been detected since 2020.

The nMDS analysis demonstrates that overall, the assemblages of arboreal mammal species have remained similar since 2001 (**Figure 13**). All years' show at least 65% similarity, with the most similar years being 2003, 2016, 2008 and 2020 (100% similarity) also year groupings of (2013 and 2015) (2010, 2017-2019) and (2006, 2007, 2009, 2012, 2014) all have 100% similarity within each grouping. The current years results are most closely similar (85% to 2011, 2013 and 2015) Variation of arboreal mammal assemblages, year to year, can be attributed to the sporadic detections of less common or highly mobile species such as the Greater Glider (*Petauroides volans*), Squirrel Glider (*Petaurus norfolcensis*) and the Feathertail Glider (*Acrobates pygmaeus*).



**Figure 13:** nMDS analysis of arboreal mammal species detected in all quadrats 2001 – 2023.

### 3.5.1.2 Terrestrial Mammals

The 2023 surveys recorded a total of five terrestrial mammal species (**Figure 12**) which is slightly above the average for all years (4.6 species). The terrestrial species comprised four native species; Bush Rat (*Rattus fuscipes*), Eastern Grey Kangaroo (*Macropus giganteus*), Swamp Wallaby (*Wallabia bicolor*) and the Swamp Rat (*Rattus lutreolus*) with one feral species detected in this year's surveys - the Black Rat (*Rattus rattus*). The nMDS analysis of terrestrial mammals (**Figure 14**) shows variation in species assemblages throughout the monitoring period with all years being at least 60% similar with several clusters of years being highly similar to each other ( $\geq 80\%$ ) with the 2023 data being closely related to 2005 (100%).

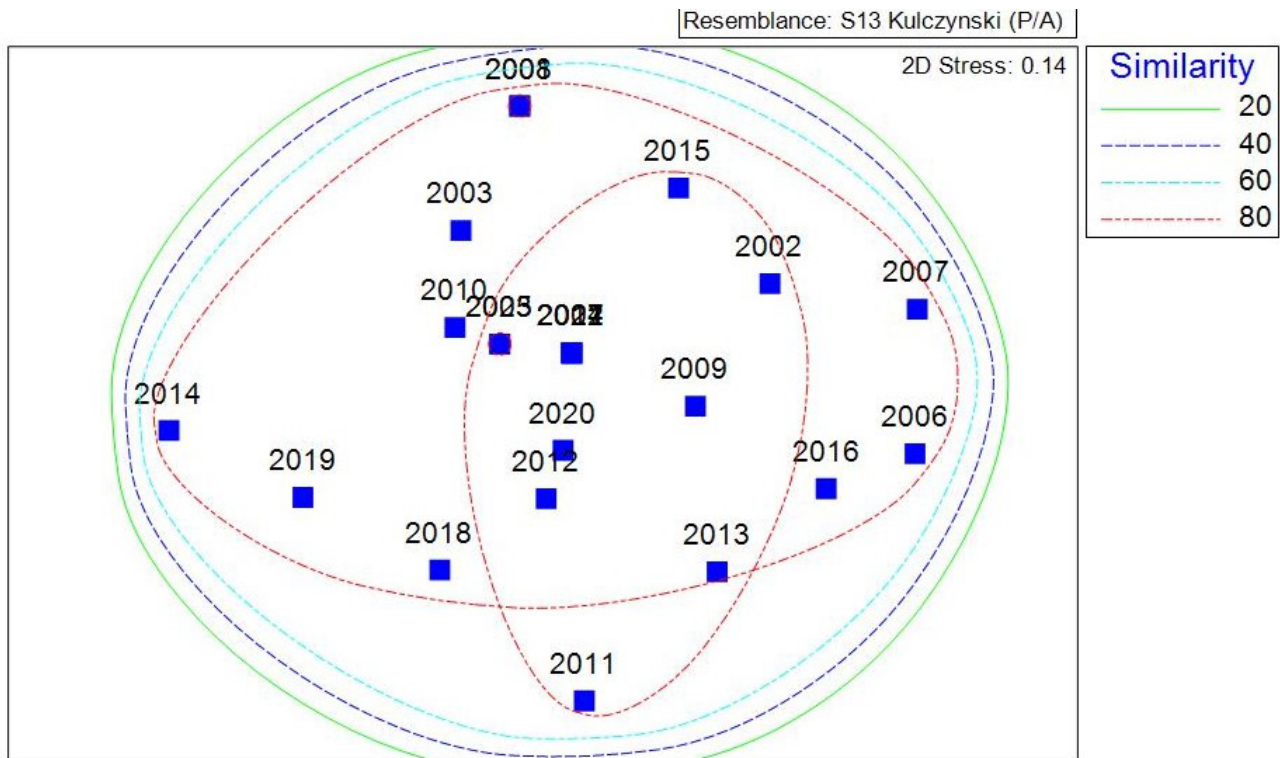
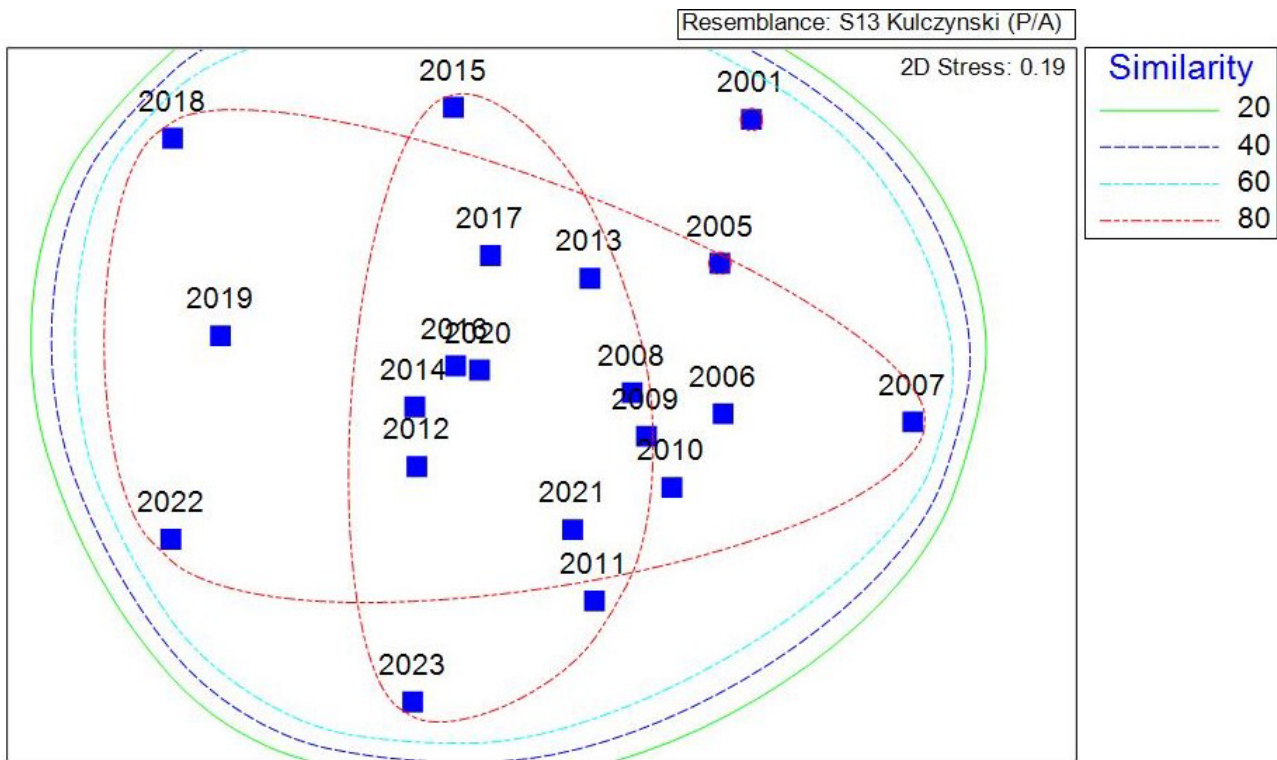


Figure 14: nMDS analysis of terrestrial mammal species detected in all quadrats 2001 – 2023.

### 3.5.1.3 Bats

A total of 15 species of bat were recorded across all nine quadrats during 2023 (Figure 12). This is equal to the yearly average of 15 species. Six of the 15 bat species recorded during the 2023 survey are listed as threatened under the BC Act. The six threatened bat species included: Eastern False Pipistrelle (*Falsistrellus tasmaniensis*), Little Bentwing-bat (*Miniopterus australis*), Eastern Bentwing-bat (*Miniopterus oceansis*) Large-footed Myotis (*Myotis macropus*), East Coast Freetail-bat (*Mormopterus norfolkensis*) and Grey-headed Flying-fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*). Bats account for 20% of all fauna species detected in the 2023 surveys.

The nMDS showed the bat assemblages of all years were at least 68% similar, with three clusters of years that were at least 80% similar. The 2023 results are 88% similar with 2014, 2016 and 2020 with all results being at least 80% similar with each other. Although one year was found to be statistically different from the other years and this was 2018 with only 62% similarity. There was no clear pattern in the variation in species assemblages over time (Figure 15).

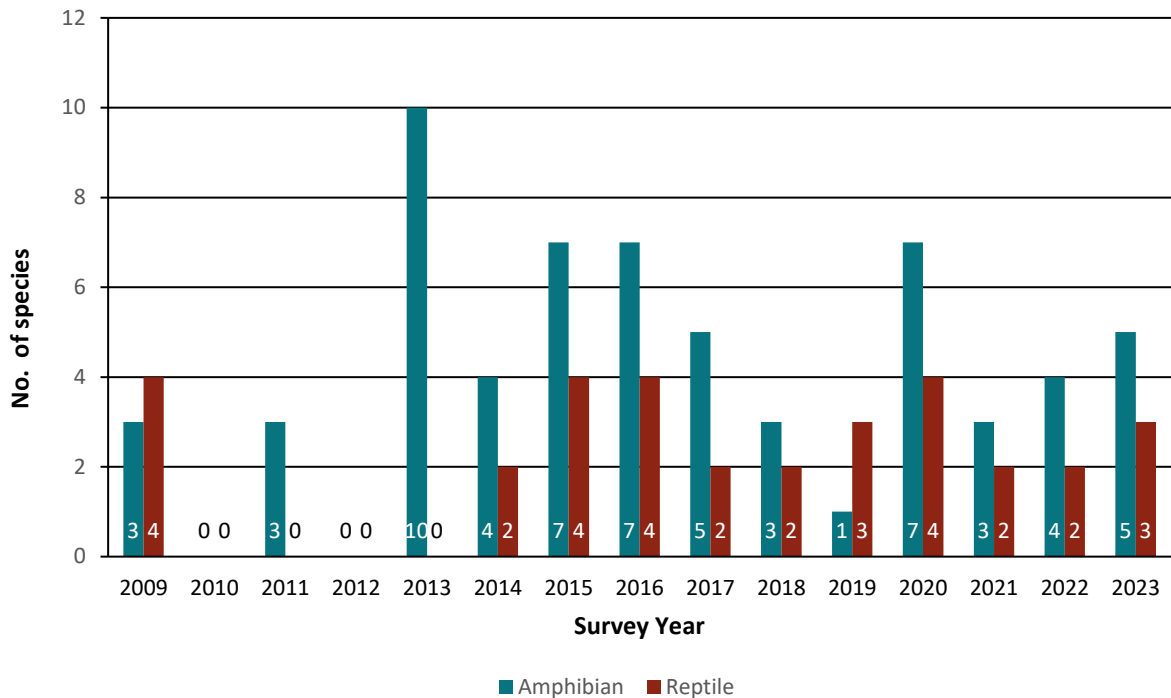


**Figure 15: nMDS analysis of bat species detected in all quadrats 2001 – 2023.**

### 3.5.2 Herpetofauna

Although herpetofauna monitoring is not officially part of the monitoring program, reptile and amphibian species were recorded opportunistically during survey events. No reptile or amphibian species were recorded prior to 2009, as such, herpetofauna was excluded from the statistical analyses comparing species assemblage similarity for those years. A full species list can be found in **Appendix D**.

Current survey identified five amphibian species, three reptile species the Eastern Bearded Dragon (*Pogona barbata*) was identified in Q7 and the Lace Monitor (*Varanus varius*) within Q5, also Diamond Python (*Morelia spilota spilota*) during spotlighting events within Q7.



**Figure 16: Number of amphibian and reptile species recorded within all quadrats over time.**

### 3.5.3 Birds

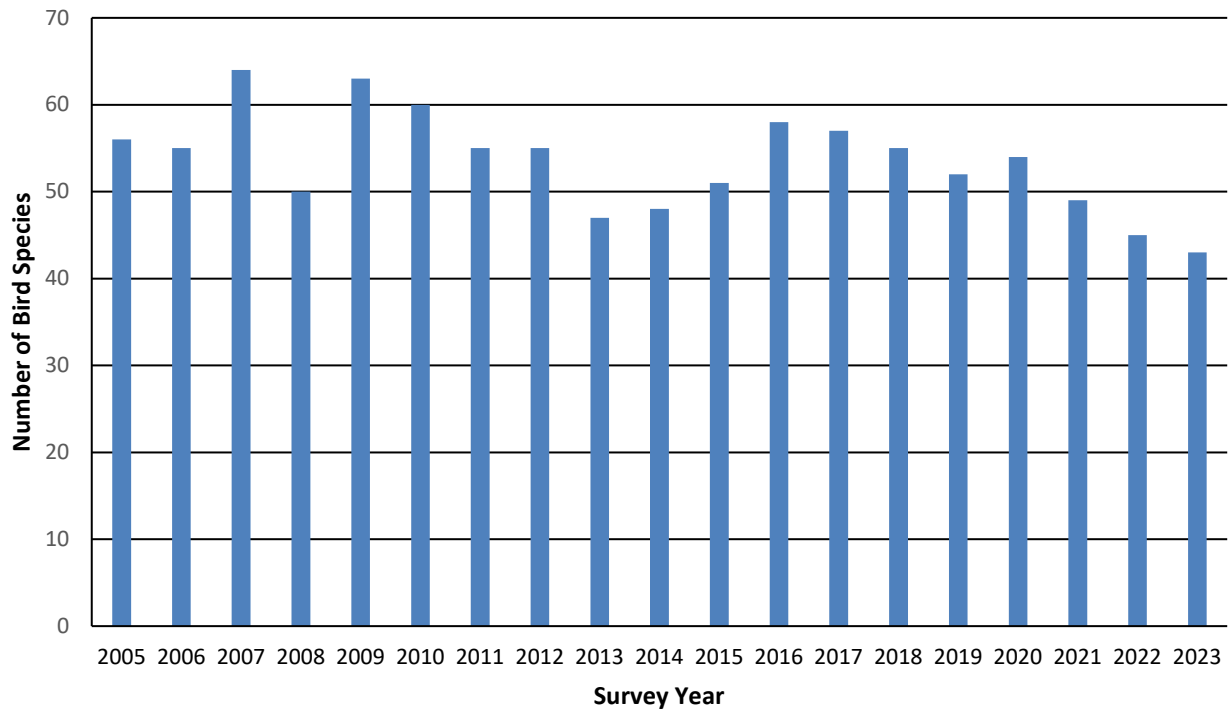
A total of 43 bird species were recorded across the nine quadrats during the 2023 surveys, which is below the average of 54.9 species across all years (**Figure 10**). Overall, the number of bird species recorded each year has remained relatively constant with no marked increase or decrease. No previously undetected species (from quadrat surveys) was recorded in 2023. Two species listed as vulnerable under the BC Act were detected in 2023, the Little Lorikeet (*Glossopsitta pusilla*) at Q3, Q4, and Q8 also the Powerful Owl (*Ninox strenua*) at Q2 and Q4.

A total of 112 species have been recorded since monitoring began which belong to 41 families, of which the most common are Meliphagidae (Honeyeaters), Psittacidae (Parrots), Acanthizidae (Thornbills, Scrub wrens and Gerygones), Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves), Cuculidae (Cuckoos) and Artamidae (Woodswallows, Butcherbirds, Australian Magpies and Currawongs). A total of 20 families were only represented on site by one species, however, several of these families such as the Podargidae (Frogmouths), Coraciidae (Rollers), Oriolidae (Orioles and Figbird), Dicaeidae (Flowerpeckers) and Megapode (Mound Builders) have only 1 – 3 species present in Australia. The full list of bird species is detailed in **Appendix C**.

A total of seven threatened bird species have been recorded across the nine quadrats to date. Three of these species are large forest owls (Sooty Owl, Powerful Owl, and Masked Owl) and four are woodland bird species (Glossy Black-Cockatoo, Little Lorikeet, Dusky Wood Swallow and Varied Sittella).

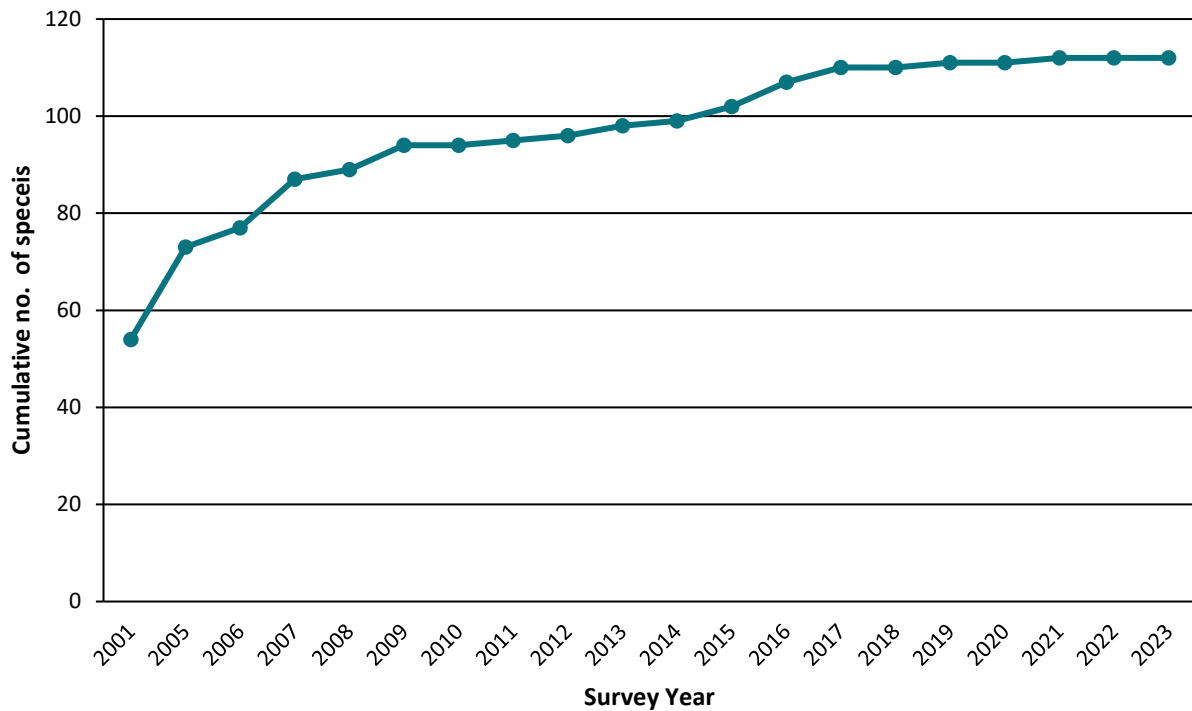
The Sooty Owl has only been recorded within the BCA twice (2001 and 2016). The Masked Owl has been recorded between 2014 and 2018, as well as 2009 and 2010, but was not recorded in this survey period. The Powerful Owl has been recorded in all years except 2009, 2012, 2013, 2016,

2021 and was recorded this year (2023). The Little Lorikeet and Varied Sittella have been recorded infrequently throughout the monitoring period. The Glossy Black-Cockatoo was recorded for the first time in 2016. No feral bird species have been recorded on or in the immediate vicinity of the quadrats to date. The total number of bird species recorded each year is displayed in **Figure 17**.



**Figure 17: Total number of bird species recorded in all quadrats 2001 – 2023 (excluding 2002 - 2004).**

**Figure 18** shows the cumulative number of bird species recorded since the baseline survey event. The cumulative number of species has been increasing steadily every year since the baseline. The flattening of the species curves suggests that most species likely to occur at the site have now been recorded; however, a few new species are still being recorded in recent years.

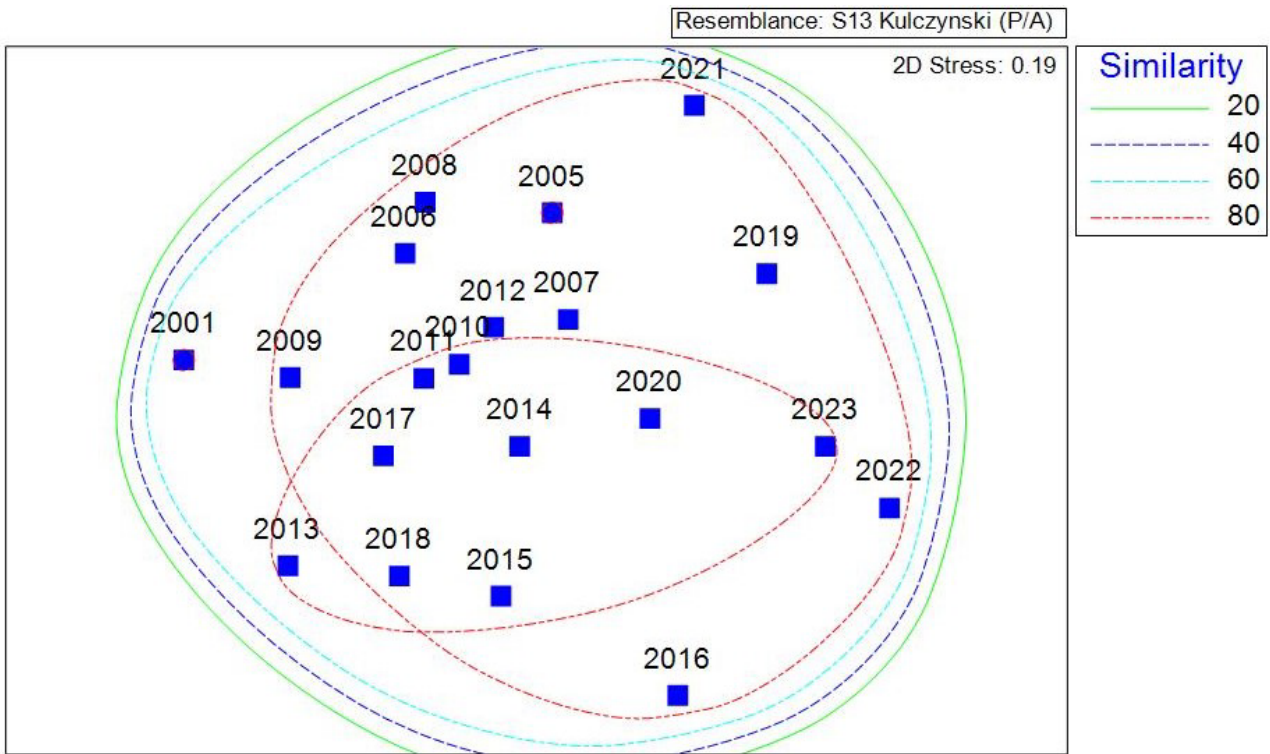


**Figure 18: The cumulative bird species count since the baseline (2001) survey event.**

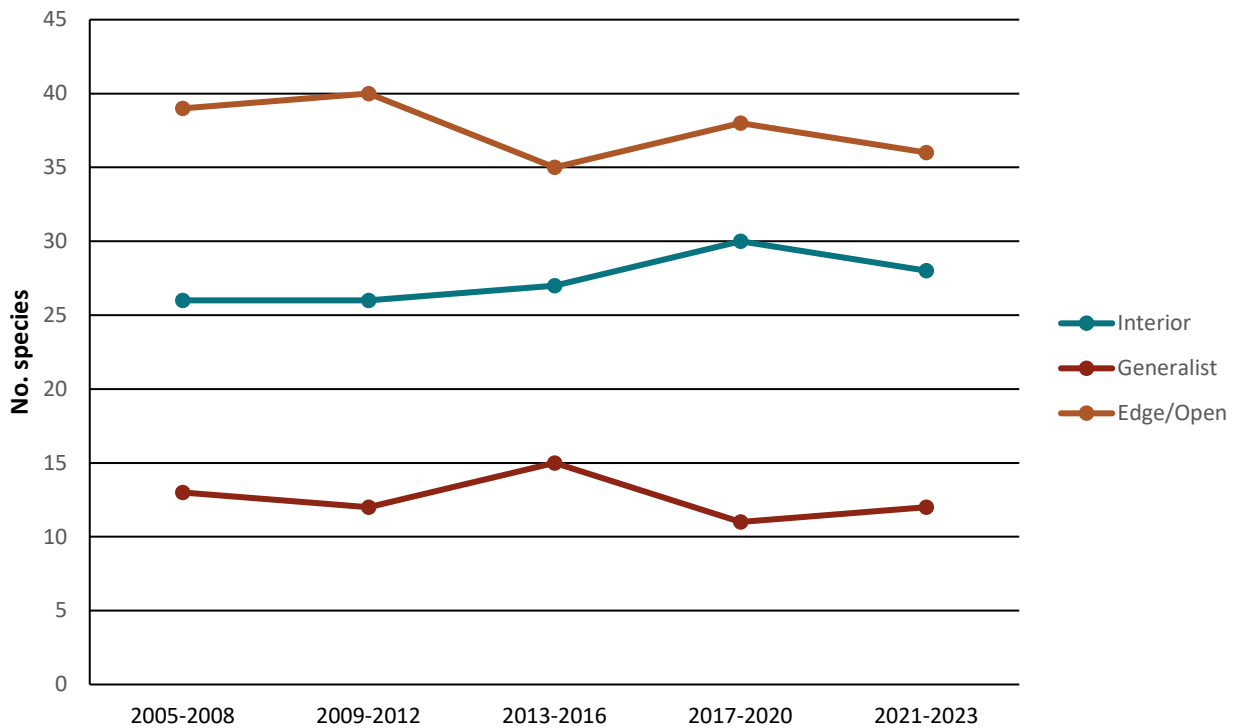
Despite the total number of bird species recorded each year remaining relatively constant over time, the nMDS similarity analysis (**Figure 18**) showed a pattern of clustering of survey years similar to that observed for all fauna groups, suggesting that changes in bird assemblages may be responsible for the similarity results observed for all fauna (when vertebrate classes are grouped together due to the number of species within the bird group).

The SIMPROF cluster analysis (**Appendix E**) revealed that bird assemblages from the year group of 2016 and the group 2019 to 2023 are the most dissimilar statistically (70% confidence) compared to other years. With all other years being at least 74% similar with each other. To investigate this recent trend further, bird species were pooled (refer to 2016 annual report) based on general habitat preference (generalist, forest interior specialist, forest edge/open grassland preferred). Survey years were then pooled together to form the groups 2005 – 2008, 2008 – 2012 and 2013 – 2016 (the period since mining operations has ceased).

The analysis found that the average of the 2005-2008, 2009-2012 and 2013-2016 periods shows birds with generalist habitat preference have continued to be around 26-27 species per 4-year period with an increase to 30 species within the latest period of 2019-2023. In the period of 2013-2016 there was an average of 35 species (decrease of 12.5% from previous period) in the number of forest-interior specialists recorded increasing in the 2019-2023 period to 38 species (increase of 8%). Forest edge/open grassland species did increase by 20% (2009-2012 12 species to 15 species 2013-2016) since the cessation of mining operations in 2012 although decreasing by 26.6% to 11 species in the 2017-2020 period. This analysis will be undertaken again in 2024 (24 years of monitoring) to see whether this identified trend continues.



**Figure 19:** nMDS analysis of bird species detected in all quadrats 2001 – 2023 (excluding 2002 – 2004)



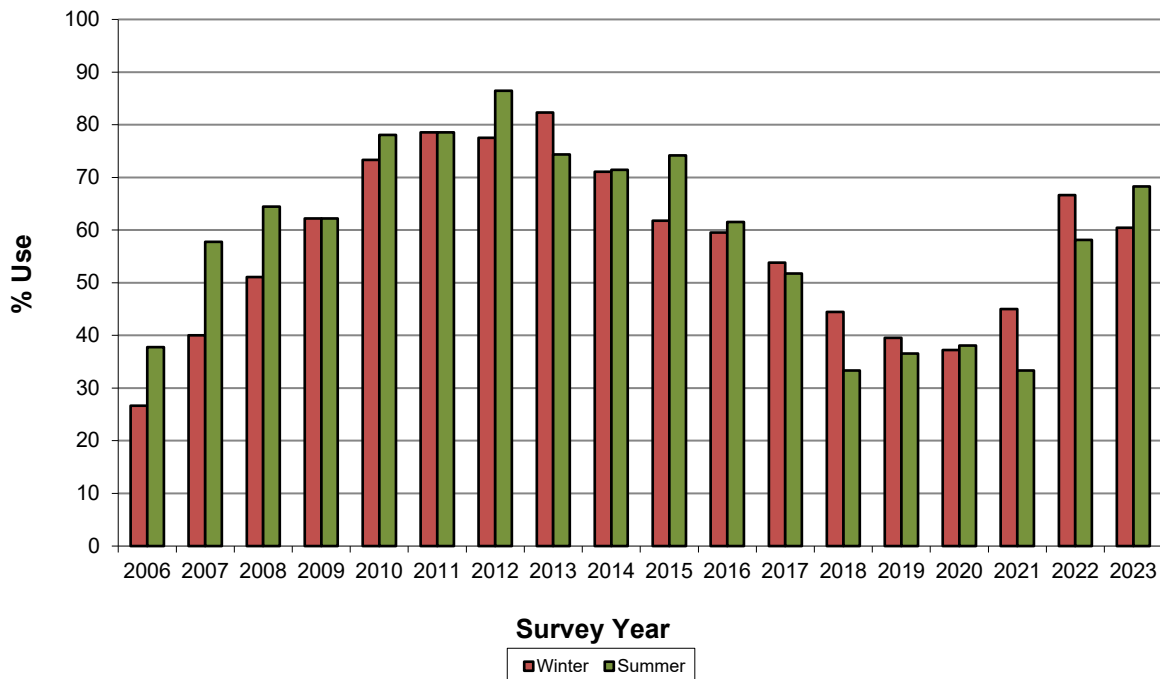
**Figure 20:** Number of birds per guild from 2005-2023



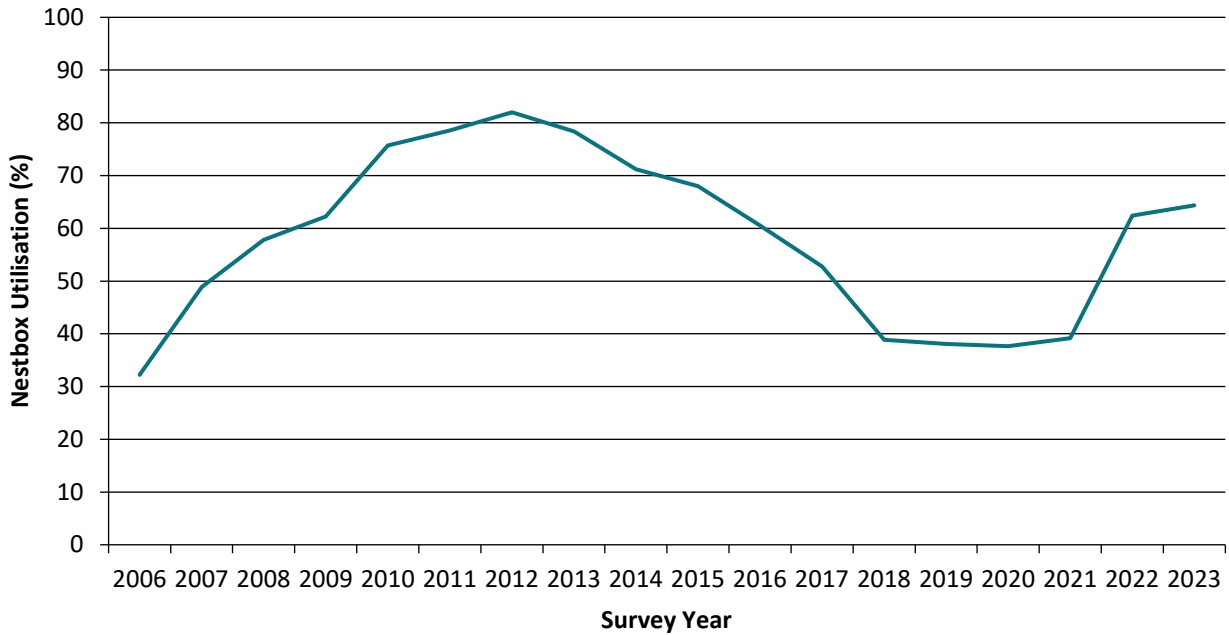
### 3.5.4 Nest Box Monitoring

Initially, 45 nest boxes were installed across the nine quadrats in 2005, however, three were removed in 2010 due to the construction of the western Square Pit. The three nest boxes removed were replaced in May 2016 with new nest boxes at different locations within Quadrat 2. In total 15 nest boxes were replaced in 2016. After the 2018 winter surveys, 15 nest boxes were replaced and three (3) repaired bringing the total available boxes back to 45. Total nest box utilisation is 56% in the summer period (**Figure 21**). A single factor ANOVA was not conducted for Summer 2023 due to the difference in the number of available boxes between seasons. All 45 nest boxes were checked once during summer in 2023 to determine occupancy rates.

Nest box utilisation appears to be plateauing with similar usage rates to last year (**Figure 22**). Four mammal species were confirmed to have used the nest boxes, Sugar Glider (*Petaurus breviceps*), Brown Antechinus (*Antechinus stuartii*), Feather Tail Glider (*Acrobates pygmaeus*) and Common Brushtail Possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*).

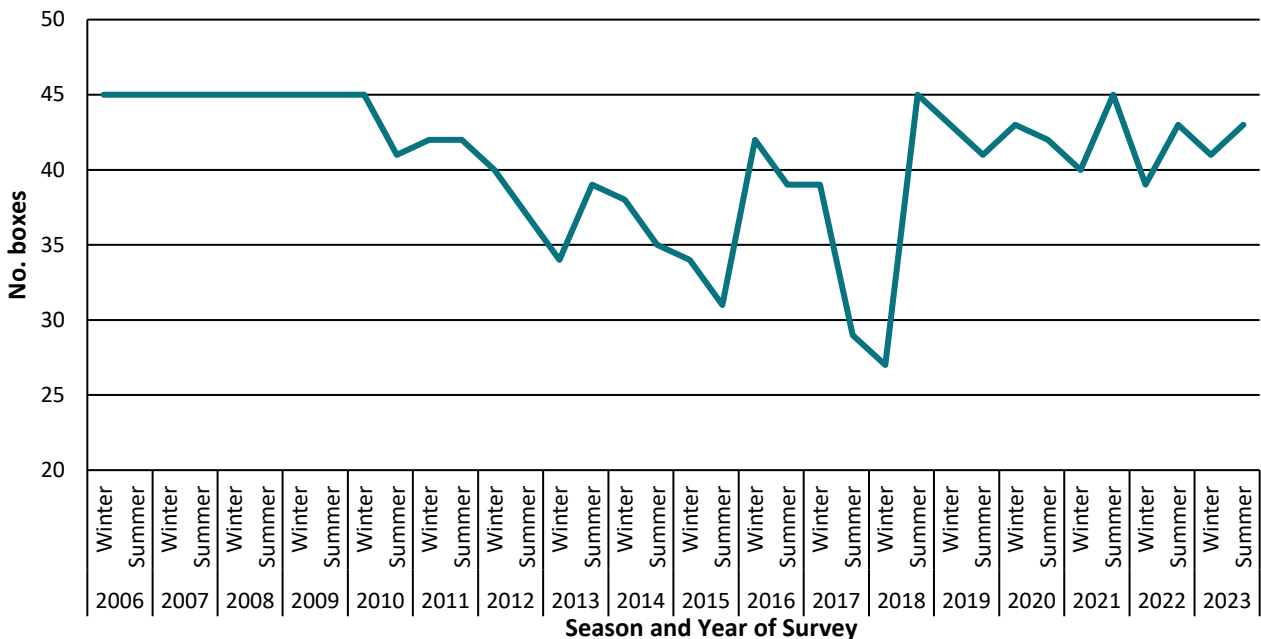


**Figure 21:** The proportion of nest boxes utilised in winter and summer between 2006 and 2023.



**Figure 22: Nest box usage, summer and winter combined (2006 – 2023). Usage rates are calculated based on available boxes.**

**Figure 23** shows the number of nest boxes available for use since installation in 2005. There was no decline in nest box availability from 2006 until 2010. Since then, nest box availability has fluctuated due to weather and termite damage and the repair and installation of new nest boxes.



**Figure 23: Number of available nest boxes over time (2005 - 2023)**

## 4. DISCUSSION

### 4.1 VEGETATION

Plant species numbers have increased since 2001, as have all floristic structural components. This is indicative of a dynamic plant community with high recruitment from the seed bank, indicating a healthy plant community status. While the species composition recorded in each quadrat has changed over the survey period, the number of species identified within each quadrat has remained relatively consistent over time. The current survey results have revealed a moderate increase in species richness and cover since the 2019 survey, likely indicative of recovery from drought conditions experienced on site between 2018 and 2019.

Previous weed control has been effective in controlling *L. camara* and allowing the subsequent recruitment of native species, particularly in Quadrats 5 and Quadrat 7 where *L. camara* has noticeably declined. Follow-up weed control is critical to ensure the effective long-term management of these infestations and to limit regrowth. *L. camara* was identified as having a low cover (<5%) but common at Quadrats 6, 7 and 8. Quadrat 6 has a persistently high exotic plant coverage, with an estimated cover of >75% in the ground layer (primarily *Tradescantia fluminensis*). Immediate control in Quadrat 6 for *T. fluminensis* is recommended to prevent further decline, while surrounding areas around Quadrats 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7 should be considered for future weed control for *L. camara*. *Ochna serrulata* (Mickey mouse plant) was identified in Q7 and in the surrounding area and has potential to spread by seed carried by birds. It is recommended that this weed species be targeted for control efforts.

Given that total weed abundance has been relatively low within the BCA since 2001, it is difficult to identify changes in community condition based on weed abundance. Community condition has more likely been affected by the steady increases in biomass, resulting from the removal of weed species, fire management and tree removal, and a healthy native seedbank.

Regression analyses examining the change in stand volume for all quadrats over time demonstrate a steady increase in these parameters. In contrast, FPC parameters demonstrated an increase in (Q1, Q2, Q6, Q8 and Q9), whilst Q3, Q4, Q5 and Q7 displayed decreases in FPC. Biomass results indicate minimal discernible adverse impact on vegetation growth and development from the surrounding mining operations. While an overall progressive increase in biomass parameters (stand volume) in the quadrats is supported by the data, the rate of increase has slowed with both parameters remaining relatively constant and displaying variability in FPC since the 2010 survey.

The FPC analysis in 2023 indicate mixed results, albeit lower than the highest values recorded in 2012/2013 survey periods. Quadrats have recorded an increase in FPC since 2019, indicating early stages of recovery post-drought conditions, however a decline in Q3, Q4, Q5 and Q7 during 2023 survey period. Stand volume continues to broadly trend positively with some quadrats recording a slightly lower stand volume likely the result of the inclusion of a number of small trees which had reached the 2 m threshold. Minimal regeneration of the canopy layer, a declining shrub layer and reduced ground cover is evident to various degrees at each quadrat – however results indicate early stages of recovery following the return of more favourable climatic conditions.

#### 4.1.1 Myrtle Rust

In 2013 Quadrat 6 recorded a decrease in FPC resulting from the decline of *R. psidioides* species from rust fungus. In 2015, several of the seedlings were still present despite being infected, however the mature trees within and adjacent to Quadrat 6 were declining in health. By 2016, the mature

trees had completely died off, and only one seedling was present. The species has been recorded absent from Quadrat 6 during the 2018, 2019 and 2020 surveys.

Myrtle rust is a plant disease caused by the exotic fungus *Uredo rangellii*. It is a serious pathogen which affects plants belonging to the family Myrtaceae including Australian natives such as *Callistemon spp.*, *Melaleuca spp.* and *Eucalyptus spp.* It was first detected in Australia in 2010 on the NSW Central Coast. Over 100 native plant species in NSW are known to be susceptible host species to the fungus, including several species present within the BCA: *Backhousia myrtifolia*, *Callistemon salignus*, *Eucalyptus pilularis*, *Melaleuca linariifolia* and *Syncarpia glomulifera*. While no other evidence of Myrtle Rust was observed within Quadrat 6, or other areas of the BCA, monitoring for evidence of the fungus will continue as part of future surveys.

## 4.2 FAUNA

Fauna species richness has plateaued over the previous three years with 2022 and 2023 recording the same number of species steadily during 2023. The current survey recorded 75 species, which is 5.8 below the yearly average of 81.9 (excluding 2002-2004 where no bird surveys were conducted). Species recorded include 43 birds, which is slightly below to the long-term average, and this is the fauna group affecting the overall numbers of species identified. Nine non-flying mammals were recorded, slightly below the yearly average of 9.1. The species assemblages of arboreal mammals have been relatively constant throughout the monitoring period as Brown Antechinus, Sugar Glider and Common Brushtail Possum have been recorded every year.

The nMDS analysis of terrestrial mammals (**Figure 14**) indicates variation in species assemblages with no clear pattern. This may be attributed to the detectability of species, for example the Short-beaked Echidna (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*) was recorded in 2014 and 2019 only. This species is somewhat secretive and could easily go undetected despite its presence within the BCA.

Bat species assemblages have remained stable over the years, any variations do not fit a clear pattern. The ecology of most Australian bat species is poorly understood making interpretation difficult. The number of species detected each year has remained high which is a positive sign that bats are not in a decline. In 2018 and 2019 a difference is evident in the nMDS analysis from the rest of the other years, this is likely a result of the variation of species detected compared to earlier years. In 2023 the nMDS analysis shows that the species assemblages have return to more similar levels before the 2018 period.

The cluster analysis identified a trend in the bird species assemblages. The assemblages recorded in the most recent years being most different from those recorded prior to 2013. To investigate the cause of the changing species assemblage, species were grouped according to general habitat preference (generalist, forest-interior specialist, and forest edge specialist). With the addition of the 2019 - 2023 time period, trends indicate that the species with generalist habitat requirements have remained relatively stable since from 2005 to 2016 with an increase of three species. Species that prefer forest edges or open areas have decreased since the 2013-2016 period where previously they had increased. While interior specialist species appeared to be significantly decreasing at the end of the 2013-2016 period (Kleinfelder 2016), in the latest period there has been an increase in numbers. This latest four-year period shows that there are fluctuations within the edge/open and interior species throughout the years with generalist species slowly increasing each period.

Given that mining ceased in 2012 it is possible that changes in disturbance have led specialist species to move in or out of the area. Observed changes in species assemblages over the last four-years show that interior species have moved back into the area with edge/open area species moving

out. The change in the bird species assemblage may fluctuate slowly occurring over time as a result of mining activities or due to large-scale vegetation clearing and development in the neighbouring industrial estate immediately to the east, which commenced in 2012 and is still ongoing.

The creation of more edge habitat along the eastern edge of the BCA may have made the habitat less suitable for some specialist species or detectability of these species may have been lower. It is most likely a combination of these two factors that has caused the changes observed in the 2023 analysis. The specialist species either the interior or edge that were recorded pre-2012 but not post-2012 may still be present within the BCA but might have experienced population decline, reducing their detectability. These increases and declines in species assemblages cannot be explained by any single factor but could be linked to many factors such as the closing of the mine in 2012, clearing of habitat in 2012 on the eastern boundary, natural fluctuations of species numbers, climatic conditions over each time period or detectability of some species within the BCA may all be factors.

With the cessation of the open-cut mine and the continued maturation of the adjacent rehabilitation area, these species may return or recover to previous population levels. This observed change in species composition may also be due to natural fluctuations either locally or regionally and not be related to mining activities.

The threatened Powerful Owl was detected during the 2023 surveys (Quadrat 2 and 4) which was previously recorded for the 2021 survey period within multiple locations (Quadrat 3, 6 and 8). The Sooty Owl has rarely been observed over the survey period with the last detection in 2001 (Quadrat 2) and in 2016 (Quadrat 3). The Masked Owl, however, has been more regularly detected with sightings in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 but has not been sighted in the last four years. Given that the species has been recorded for five consecutive years, this would suggest that there is a roosting location nearby. This was supported in 2015 when regurgitated pellets were found around the base of a tree where a Masked Owl was observed.

Given that a hazard reduction burn occurred in the northern portion of the BCA in late 2020, future fauna surveys should consider the potential influence of the burn on species occurrence and diversity.

### **4.3 NEST BOXES**

The usage rate of nest boxes (percentage of available nest boxes showing signs of usage) by fauna increased in a linear fashion for the first five years following installation, after which, usage plateaued, followed by a decline. This pattern of nest box usage after five years of deployment has been observed in several other nest box monitoring programs in native forest (Kleinfelder 2015; Lindenmayer et al. 2009). For the first few years after installation, reasonable levels of nest box use were recorded. This was followed by high levels of nest box attrition after 8-10 years. These findings led to the suggestion of an 'effective occupancy time' of approximately five years for arboreal mammals. That is, the materials used in current nest box designs have a lifespan of only 8 – 10 years before they reach a point of decay where arboreal fauna no longer use them.

Another explanation for the rapid rise in nest box use, followed by a plateau and subsequent decrease could be due to the installation of new nest boxes as those installed in 2005 began to deteriorate as materials aged. Several nest box repair and replacement events have occurred since 2005. Although nest box utilisation is calculated based on the number of available nest boxes, this does not discount the fact that new nest boxes are not inhabited immediately and take time for fauna to take residence. Similar to the trends experienced for those nest boxes installed in 2005, it may

take up to 3-4 years for new nest boxes to reach ~50% utilisation and about eight years for nest boxes to reach peak occupancy.

The current survey demonstrates a change after the decline of unusable nest boxes with levels similar to 2019. However, given that previous trends indicate that nest box utilisation is often low for boxes less than 5 years old, it could be expected that future monitoring may show a considerable increase in utilisation (as a large number of boxes will now have been installed for 4-5 years). Ongoing maintenance (fixing broken lids and hinges and removal of undesirable species such as termites and wasps) and replacement of broken boxes is required to ensure the ongoing success of the nest box program within the Donaldson BCA.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The monitoring program indicates that the Donaldson Coal operations are causing minimal impact to biodiversity within the BCA. This conclusion is based on the summary of information provided below:

All biomass variables examined (i.e., basal area, height, foliage projective cover (FPC) and stand volume), have shown relatively consistent increases over the last 19 years since the baseline survey in 2001. The regression analyses also confirmed that the relationship between time and increases in stand volume were highly significant indicating that the community biomass has increased substantially across time with no significant year-to-year variation from 2001 to 2023. The rate of increase in both biomass parameters has slowed since 2010, with slight decreases in FPC at most quadrats since 2011. Analysis indicates that FPC may be stabilising at levels lower than the highest levels recorded during the 2012 and 2013 survey periods. Most quadrats have recorded an increase in FPC since 2019, except Q8 suffering from previous fire event, however future surveys and analysis should reveal whether FPC is stabilising.

Overall plant species numbers have increased since 2001 as have all floristic structural components which is indicative of a dynamic plant community with high recruitment from the seed pool, normally an indicator of healthy, regenerating plant community status. Results from the current survey indicate early stages of recovery in floristics and structural components following the return of more favourable climatic conditions and end of the drought.

The total number of fauna species recorded during the monitoring surveys has remained relatively constant over the 20 years since monitoring began. There has been a general increase in the total number of species recorded since the cessation of mining in 2012.

The number of mammal species recorded has remained constant. There has been some variation in the species assemblages over time, which is likely due to species detectability and their ecology.

The number of bird species recorded each year for those with generalist habitat preferences remained relatively constant over the monitoring period. Between 2019 – 2023, the number of species that prefer the forest-interior have increased; the number of forest edge specialists have decreased. In recent years, there has been a shift in species assemblages with respect to birds with habitat specialisation. This trend will be investigated further in 2024 (year 24 of monitoring).

Nest box monitoring shows that fauna utilisation increased from the year of installation (2005) to 2012 and then decreased. A decrease in fauna utilisation following the 2012 monitoring event is likely to be due to weather damage, which makes the nest boxes less habitable. The replacement of damaged boxes occurred in winter 2018 which has reduced the downward trend of utilisation due

uninhabitable boxes. It is expected that nest boxes installed in 2018 will become more suitable over the coming years as arboreal fauna become more habituated.

## **6. RECOMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are considered necessary to maintain biodiversity values within the BCA:

Monitoring should continue so that trends evident in the first 20 years may be better understood.

Nest boxes should continue to be monitored biannually. Repairs and nest box replacements should be made as required.

Weed control, targeting *L. camara*, *Ochna serrulata* and *T. fluminensis* is recommended in areas with dense infestations. This should be conducted by a suitably qualified bush regenerator using correct spraying applications in high density zones and manual removal techniques in native vegetation dominant areas to limit off target damage. Follow up weed control applications are highly recommended for *T. fluminensis* and *L. Camara* for successful eradication.

The monitoring program indicates that the Donaldson Coal operations are causing minimal impact to biodiversity within the BCA; however, further monitoring will be required to assess accumulative impacts on biodiversity caused by other direct impacts and indirect pressures. This will elucidate the effects of confounding factors such as the impacts of residential development at the eastern edge of the BCA from 2012 and determine the influence of climate change and seasonal variation. Future years of monitoring should continue to analyse the diversity of specialist and generalist species separately and should focus on abundance trends of sensitive flora and fauna species, including threatened species.

## **7. REFERENCES**

- Barker Harle 2001, Donaldson open-cut coal mine Beresfield, Quadrat monitoring program baseline report, September-October 2001, Barker Harle Pty Limited Report to Donaldson Coal.
- Ecobiological 2002, Donaldson Open-cut Coal Mine Beresfield, Flora and Fauna Management Plan, Revision March 2007, EcoBiological Survey & Assessment, Gateshead, NSW.
- Ecobiological 2004, Donaldson Open-cut Coal Mine Beresfield, Annual Flora and Fauna Monitoring, EcoBiological Survey & Assessment, Gateshead, NSW.
- Ecobiological 2007, Donaldson Open-cut Coal Mine Beresfield, Flora and Fauna Management Plan, Revision March 2007, EcoBiological Survey & Assessment, Gateshead, NSW.
- Department of Primary Industries 2015. Myrtle Rust. <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/plant/myrtle-rust#What-is-Myrtle-rust-em?-em->
- Donaldson Coal 2019, Donaldson Coal Mine and Abel Underground Coal Mine Flora and Fauna Management Plan – Care and Maintenance (Version 4), Donaldson Coal, Beresfield NSW.
- Gunninah 2000, Donaldson Open-cut Mine Beresfield, Flora and Fauna Management Plan, Gunninah Environmental Consultants, Crow's Nest.
- Harden, GJ (ed) 1992, Flora of New South Wales Volume 3, NSW University Press, Sydney.
- Harden, GJ (ed) 1993, Flora of New South Wales Volume 4, NSW University Press, Sydney.
- Harden, GJ (ed) 2000, Flora of New South Wales Volume 1, NSW University Press, Sydney.
- Harden, GJ (ed) 2002 Flora of New South Wales Volume 2, NSW University Press, Sydney.
- Krebs, CJ 1999, Ecological Methodology, Benjamin/Cummings, Menlo Park, CA.
- Kleinfelder 2018, Annual Flora and Fauna Monitoring: Donaldson Open-cut Coal Mine, Beresfield NSW. Report prepared for Yancoal Australia Pty Ltd, January 2019.
- Le Brocque, AF and Buckney, RT 1997, Multivariate Relationships between Floristic Composition and Stand Structure in Vegetation of Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, New South Wales, Australian Journal of Botany 45, pp 1033-1044.
- Lindenmayer DB, Welsh A, Donnelly C, Crane M, Michael D, Macgregor C, McBurney L, Montague-Drake R and Gibbons P, 2009. Are nest boxes a viable alternative source of cavities for hollow-dependent animals? Long-term monitoring of nest box occupancy, pest use and attrition, Biological Conservation, 142: 33-42.
- NSW NPWS 2000. Vegetation Survey, Classification and Mapping Lower Hunter and Central Coast Region Version 1.2, A project undertaken for The Lower Hunter and Central Coast Regional Environment Management Strategy CRA Unit Sydney Zone, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.
- Office of Environment and Heritage (2011). Management Plan for Myrtle Rust on the National Parks Estate. Office of Environment and Heritage NSW, Sydney.
- Specht, RL 1981, Foliage Projective Cover and Standing Biomass, In 'Vegetation Classification in Australia' (Eds AN Gillison and DJ Anderson.) pp 10-21 (CSIRO-ANU Press, Canberra).



Specht, RL 1983, Foliage projective covers of overstorey and understorey strata of mature vegetation in Australia, *Australian Journal of Ecology* 8, pp 433-439.

Specht, RL & Specht, A 1999, *Australian Plant Communities, Dynamics of Structure, Growth and Biodiversity*, Oxford University Press.

Specht, RL & Specht, A 2002, *Australian Plant Communities, Dynamics of Structure, Growth and Biodiversity 2nd Edition*, Oxford University Press.

Winkworth, RE & Goodall, DW 1962 A Crosswire Sighting Tube for Point Quadrat Analyses, *Ecology* 43, pp 342-343.

Wintle, BA, Kavanagh, RP, McCarthy, MA & Burgman, MA 2005, Estimating and dealing with detectability in occupancy surveys for forest owls and arboreal marsupials, *Journal of Wildlife Management* 69(3), pp 905-917.

## APPENDIX A: PLANT SPECIES RECORDED IN THE BASELINE (2001), 2022 AND 2023 SURVEY EVENTS

A represents the baseline (2001) survey.

B represents the 2022 survey

C represents the 2023 survey

Family Name	Scientific Name	Common Name	Q1			Q2			Q3			Q4			Q5			Q6			Q7			Q8			Q9			
			A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	
Acanthaceae	<i>Brunoniella australis</i>	Blue Trumpet		1	1					2	2		2	2		1	1							1	1		2	2		
Acanthaceae	<i>Pseuderanthemum variabile</i>	Pastel Flower		1	1		2	2		2	2	+	1	2		2	2				+	2	2		2	2				
Anthericaceae	<i>Arthropodium milleflorum</i>	Pale Vanilla-lily											1				1										1	1		
Anthericaceae	<i>Caesia parviflora</i> subsp. <i>parviflora</i>																													
Anthericaceae	<i>Thysanotus tuberosus</i> subsp. <i>tuberosus</i>	Common Fringe-lily																												
Anthericaceae	<i>Tricoryne simplex</i>																													
Aphanopetalaceae	<i>Aphanopetalum resinosum</i>	Gum Vine					1																							
Apiaceae	<i>Hydrocotyle peduncularis</i>																													
Apiaceae	<i>Hydrocotyle laxiflora</i>														2	2					2	2								
Apiaceae	<i>Centella asiatica</i>	Indian Pennywort																						2	2					
Apocynaceae	<i>Marsdenia flavescens</i>	Hairy Milk Vine																												
Apocynaceae	<i>Marsdenia rostrata</i>	Common Milk Vine																			2	1								
Apocynaceae	<i>Marsdenia suaveolens</i>	Scented Marsdenia																												
Apocynaceae	<i>Parsonsia straminea</i>	Common Silkpod		1	2	+	1	1		1			1	1						+	1	1								
Apocynaceae	<i>Tylophora barbata</i>	Bearded Tylophora								1																				
Araceae	<i>Gymnostachys anceps</i>	Settlers Flax					+	2	2											+	1	1								
Araliaceae	<i>Polyscias sambucifolia</i> subsp. <i>sambucifolia</i>									1	1												1			1	1		2	2
Arecaceae	<i>Livistona australis</i>	Cabbage-tree Palm		1	1																									
Asteraceae	* <i>Sonchus asper</i>	Prickly Sowthistle																										1	1	
Asteraceae	* <i>Facelis retusa</i>	Annual Trampweed																										1		
Asteraceae	* <i>Ageratina adenophora</i>	Crofton Weed																				1								
Asteraceae	* <i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Spear Thistle																												
Asteraceae	* <i>Conyza</i> sp.	Fleabane																				1					1		2	
Asteraceae	* <i>Conyza canadensis</i>																													
Asteraceae	* <i>Galinsoga parviflora</i>	Potato Weed																												
Asteraceae	* <i>Gamochaeta calviceps</i>	Cudweed																										1		
Asteraceae	* <i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	Catsear											1	1		1	1									1	2		1	1
Asteraceae	* <i>Senecio madagascariensis</i>	Fireweed												1												1				
Asteraceae	<i>Brachyscome multifida</i>																													
Asteraceae	<i>Cassinia</i> sp.																												1	
Asteraceae	<i>Epaltes australis</i>	Spreading Nut-heads																												
Asteraceae	<i>Euchiton sphaericus</i>																											1	1	
Asteraceae	<i>Lagenophora stipitata</i>	Blue Bottle-daisy								1	2		2	2		1	1						1		2	2		1	1	
Asteraceae	<i>Olearia nernstii</i>	Daisy								+		2																		
Asteraceae	<i>Ozothamnus diosmifolius</i>	White Dogwood																												
Asteraceae	<i>Senecio linearifolius</i>	Fireweed Groundsel																												
Asteraceae	<i>Sigesbeckia orientalis</i>	Indian Weed															1													
Asteraceae	<i>Vernonia cinerea</i> var. <i>cinerea</i>												1	1		1	1								2	1		1		
Asteraceae	<i>Vittadinia cuneata</i>	Fuzzweed																												
Bignoniaceae	<i>Pandorea pandorana</i> subsp. <i>pandorana</i>	Wonga Wonga Vine		2	2		2	2		1	1	+	2	2								2	2		+	2	2	+	2	2
Blechnaceae	<i>Blechnum minus</i>	Soft Water Fern																												
Blechnaceae	<i>Doodia aspera</i>	Prickly Rasp Fern	+	1			+	3	3												+	2	3		1	1				
Blechnaceae	<i>Doodia australis</i>	Common Rasp Fern																				+	2							
Campanulaceae	<i>Wahlenbergia gracilis</i>	Australian Bluebell																										1		
Casuarinaceae	<i>Allocasuarina torulosa</i>	Forest Oak								+	3	3										+				1	2			
Celastraceae	<i>Maytenus silvestris</i>	Narrow-leaved Orangebark	+	1	1		1			+	1	1	+	2	2		1	1			1		+	1	1			1	1	
Clusiaceae	<i>Hypericum gramineum</i>	Small St. John's Wort																												
Commelinaceae	* <i>Tradescantia fluminensis</i>	Wandering Jew																												

Family Name	Scientific Name	Common Name	Q1			Q2			Q3			Q4			Q5			Q6			Q7			Q8			Q9						
			A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C				
Commelinaceae	<i>Aneilema acuminatum</i>					1	1																										
Commelinaceae	<i>Aneilema biflorum</i>						+																										
Commelinaceae	<i>Commelina cyanea</i>	Native Wandering Jew															+	2	1														
Convolvulaceae	<i>Dichondra repens</i>	Kidney Weed						2	1						2	2					2	1				2							
Convolvulaceae	<i>Polymeria calycina</i>												+			1	1					+	2	1	+	1	1	+					
Cyperaceae	* <i>Cyperus eragrostis</i>																																
Cyperaceae	<i>Baumea articulata</i>	Jointed Twig-rush																															
Cyperaceae	<i>Baumea juncea</i>																									2	2						
Cyperaceae	<i>Carex appressa</i>	Tall Sedge											+	2	2											1	2						
Cyperaceae	<i>Carex longebrachiata</i>			1	2	+																											
Cyperaceae	<i>Cyperus fulvus</i>	Sticky Sedge																															
Cyperaceae	<i>Cyperus polystachyos</i>																																
Cyperaceae	<i>Cyperus tetrphyllus</i>																																
Cyperaceae	<i>Eleocharis cylindrostachys</i>																																
Cyperaceae	<i>Fimbristylis dichotoma</i>	Common Fringe-sedge																															
Cyperaceae	<i>Gahnia clarkei</i>	Tall Saw-sedge						1	1		2	2													3	3							
Cyperaceae	<i>Gahnia sieberiana</i>	Red-fruit Saw-sedge								+																							
Cyperaceae	<i>Isolepis inundata</i>																																
Cyperaceae	<i>Lepidosperma concavum</i>				1					+																							
Cyperaceae	<i>Lepidosperma laterale</i>			1							2	2		2	2		1	2							1	1		1	1				
Cyperaceae	<i>Machaerina rubiginosa</i>										1																						
Cyperaceae	<i>Ptilothrix deusta</i>										2	1																					
Cyperaceae	<i>Schoenus apogon</i>																																
Cyperaceae	<i>Schoenus lepidosperma</i> subsp. <i>pachylepis</i>																																
Cyperaceae	<i>Schoenus paludosus</i>																																
Dennstaedtiaceae	<i>Pteridium esculentum</i>	Common Bracken								+	1	1																					
Dilleniaceae	<i>Hibbertia aspera</i>	Rough Guinea Flower													3	3																	
Dilleniaceae	<i>Hibbertia empetrifolia</i> subsp. <i>empetrifolia</i>																																
Dilleniaceae	<i>Hibbertia obtusifolia</i>	Hoary guinea flower																															
Dilleniaceae	<i>Hibbertia pedunculata</i>																																
Dilleniaceae	<i>Hibbertia riparia</i>	Erect Guinea-flower																															
Dilleniaceae	<i>Hibbertia scandens</i>	Climbing Guinea Flower								+	2	2																					
Dioscoreaceae	<i>Dioscorea transversa</i>	Native Yam															2	2	+	1	1												
Ebenaceae	<i>Diospyros australis</i>	Black Plum																															
Elaeocarpaceae	<i>Elaeocarpus</i> sp.																																
Elaeocarpaceae	<i>Tetradlea juncea</i>	Black-eyed Susan																															
Ericaceae - Styphelioideae	<i>Leucopogon juniperinus</i>	Prickly Beard-heath									1	1		1	2											1	1	+	2	2	+	2	2
Ericaceae - Styphelioideae	<i>Leucopogon lanceolatus</i>														1	1																	
Ericaceae - Styphelioideae	<i>Lissanthe strigosa</i> subsp. <i>strigosa</i>	Peach Heath																															
Ericaceae - Styphelioideae	<i>Styphelia triflora</i>	Pink Five-Corners																															
Euphorbiaceae	<i>Homalanthus populifolius</i>	Bleeding Heart																															
Euphorbiaceae	<i>Alchornea ilicifolia</i>	Dovewood																															
Euphorbiaceae	<i>Claoxylon australe</i>	Brittlewood																															
Euphorbiaceae	<i>Croton verreauxii</i>	Green Native Cascarilla																															
Eupomatiaceae	<i>Eupomatia laurina</i>	Bolwarra																															
Fabaceae - Faboideae	<i>Daviesia squarrosa</i>																																
Fabaceae - Faboideae	<i>Daviesia ulicifolia</i>	Gorse Bitter Pea																															
Fabaceae - Faboideae	<i>Desmodium gunnii</i>	Slender Tick-trefoil																															
Fabaceae - Faboideae	<i>Desmodium rhytidophyllum</i>																																
Fabaceae - Faboideae	<i>Desmodium varians</i>	Slender Tick-trefoil																															
Fabaceae - Faboideae	<i>Dillwynia retorta</i>																																
Fabaceae - Faboideae	<i>Glycine clandestina</i>																																
Fabaceae - Faboideae	<i>Glycine microphylla</i>	Small-leaf Glycine																															
Fabaceae - Faboideae	<i>Glycine tabacina</i>																																
Fabaceae - Faboideae	<i>Gompholobium latifolium</i>	Golden Glory Pea																															





Family Name	Scientific Name	Common Name	Q1			Q2			Q3			Q4			Q5			Q6			Q7			Q8			Q9			
			A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	
Passifloraceae	<i>Passiflora aurantia</i>	Blunt-leaved Passionfruit					1																							
Phormiaceae	<i>Dianella caerulea</i> var. <i>caerulea</i>	Blue Flax-Lily	+	1			2	1	+		2	+	2	2	+	2	2				+	2	2		2	2		2	2	
Phormiaceae	<i>Dianella longifolia</i> var. <i>longifolia</i>	Blueberry Lily										+																		
Phormiaceae	<i>Dianella revoluta</i> var. <i>revoluta</i>	Blue Flax-Lily											1																	
Phyllanthaceae	<i>Breynia oblongifolia</i>	Coffee Bush	+	1	2		1	1	+	1	1		1	2		1	2		1	1	+	2	2	+	3	3	+	3	3	
Phyllanthaceae	<i>Glochidion ferdinandi</i> var. <i>ferdinandi</i>	Cheese Tree		1	1	+	3	2	+	3	3					2	2				+	4	4		1	1			1	
Phyllanthaceae	<i>Phyllanthus gunnii</i>																													
Phyllanthaceae	<i>Phyllanthus hirtellus</i>	Thyme Spurge							+	1	1																			
Phyllanthaceae	<i>Poranthera microphylla</i>															2	1							1	1			1		
Pittosporaceae	<i>Billardiera scandens</i>	Hairy Apple Berry	+						+	1	2	+		1		2	2					1					+	2	2	
Pittosporaceae	<i>Bursaria spinosa</i> subsp. <i>spinosa</i>	Native Blackthorn	+									+	3	3										+	2	2	+	3	2	
Pittosporaceae	<i>Hymenosporum flavum</i>	Native Frangipani				+	2	2																						
Pittosporaceae	<i>Pittosporum multiflorum</i>	Orange Thorn				+	1	1										+	2	2										
Pittosporaceae	<i>Pittosporum revolutum</i>	Rough Fruit Pittosporum	+	1			1	2	+	1	1					1	1													
Plantaginaceae	<i>Veronica plebeia</i>	Trailing Speedwell																											1	
Poaceae	* <i>Axonopus fissifolius</i>	Narrow-leaved Carpet Grass																												
Poaceae	<i>Anisopogon avenaceus</i>	Oat Speargrass																												
Poaceae	<i>Aristida vagans</i>	Threeawn Speargrass											1			1	1								2	2		3	3	
Poaceae	<i>Austrostipa</i> sp.																													
Poaceae	<i>Cymbopogon refractus</i>	Barbed Wire Grass											1	2														2	3	
Poaceae	<i>Cynodon dactylon</i>	Couch																						+						
Poaceae	<i>Dichelachne micrantha</i>	Shorthair Plumegrass											2	2														1	1	
Poaceae	<i>Digitaria parviflora</i>	Small-flowered Finger Grass																										1		
Poaceae	<i>Digitaria ramularis</i>																													
Poaceae	<i>Echinopogon caespitosus</i> var. <i>caespitosus</i>	Bushy Hedgehog-grass											2	2		2	2				1				2	2		2	2	
Poaceae	<i>Echinopogon ovatus</i>	Forest Hedgehog Grass										+											+							
Poaceae	* <i>Ehrharta erecta</i>																													
Poaceae	<i>Entolasia marginata</i>	Bordered Panic				+												3	3		4	4	+	2	2					
Poaceae	<i>Entolasia stricta</i>	Wiry Panic		2	2		2	2		3	3		3	3		3	3				3	3		2	2		3	3		
Poaceae	<i>Eragrostis brownii</i>	Brown's Lovegrass																												
Poaceae	<i>Imperata cylindrica</i>	Blady Grass	+		1				+	2	2	+	3	3	+	2	3				+	1	1	+	3	3	+	3	3	
Poaceae	<i>Lachnagrostis filiformis</i>																													
Poaceae	<i>Microlaena stipoides</i> var. <i>stipoides</i>	Weeping Grass		1	2		2	2		2	2			1		2	2			1		1	1		3	2		1	2	
Poaceae	<i>Oplismenus aemulus</i>			2												2	2		3	3	+				2	2				
Poaceae	<i>Oplismenus imbecillis</i>				3		3	3		2	2		2	2		3	3		4	4	+	4	4							
Poaceae	<i>Ottocloa gracillima</i>		+																		+									
Poaceae	<i>Panicum simile</i>	Two-colour Panic												1											2	2		1	3	
Poaceae	<i>Paspalidium distans</i>										1					1														
Poaceae	* <i>Paspalum dilatatum</i>	Paspalum																										1		
Poaceae	<i>Poa affinis</i>																													
Poaceae	<i>Poa labillardierei</i> var. <i>labillardierei</i>	Tussock Grass									2		3	3											2	2		2	2	
Poaceae	<i>Rytidosperma fulvum</i>											+	1	1														+	1	1
Poaceae	<i>Rytidosperma pallidum</i>	Silvertop Wallaby Grass											3	3															3	3
Poaceae	<i>Rytidosperma tenuius</i>																													
Poaceae	<i>Themeda australis</i>	Kangaroo Grass	+						+	1	2		3	3		1	1						+				+	4	4	
Poaceae	<i>Urochloa piligera</i>	Hairy Armgrass																			+									
Polygonaceae	<i>Persicaria hydropiper</i>	Water Pepper		1	1																									
Polypodiaceae	<i>Platynerium bifurcatum</i>	Elkhorn Fern					1	1																						
Proteaceae	<i>Grevillea montana</i>																											2	2	
Proteaceae	<i>Lomatia silaifolia</i>	Crinkle Bush								1	1																			
Proteaceae	<i>Persoonia linearis</i>	Narrow-leaved Geebung							+	2	2					1	1								1	1				
Proteaceae	<i>Stenocarpus salignus</i>	Scrub Beefwood		1																										
Pteridaceae	<i>Adiantum aethiopicum</i>	Common Maidenhair Fern	+	2	2	+	2	3	+	2	2				1	1		1	1	+	2	3	+	2	2					
Pteridaceae	<i>Adiantum formosum</i>	Giant Maidenhair Fern				+	3	3																						
Pteridaceae	<i>Adiantum hispidulum</i>	Rough Maidenhair Fern					2	2										1	1											



## APPENDIX B: MAMMAL SPECIES RECORDED 2001-2023

+ equals presence.

Species Name	Common Name	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Arboreal mammals</b>																								
<i>Acrobates pygmaeus</i>	Feathertail Glider	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+			+		+		+				+		+	
<i>Antechinus stuartii</i>	Brown Antechinus	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+
<i>Petauroides volans</i> ^	Greater Glider	+	+			+																		
<i>Petaurus breviceps</i>	Sugar Glider		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+		+	+
<i>Petaurus norfolcensis</i> #	Squirrel Glider		+		+	+						+												
<i>Pseudocheirus peregrinus</i>	Common Ringtail Possum		+	+	+				+			+		+		+	+				+			
<i>Trichosurus vulpecula</i>	Common Brushtail Possum	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+
<b>Bats</b>																								
<i>Chalinolobus dwyeri</i> #^	Large-eared Pied Bat							+								+								
<i>Chalinolobus gouldii</i>	Gould's Wattled Bat	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+
<i>Chalinolobus morio</i>	Chocolate Wattled Bat	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+
<i>Falsistrellus tasmaniensis</i> #	Eastern False Pipistrelle											+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+
<i>Miniopterus australis</i> #	Little Bentwing-bat	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+
<i>Miniopterus oceanensis</i> #	Eastern Bentwing-bat		+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+				+		+	
<i>Mormopterus norfolkensis</i> #	East-coast Freetail-bat	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+		+	+
<i>Mormopterus ridei</i>	Eastern Freetail-bat	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+
<i>Mormopterus spp. 4</i>	Undescribed Freetail-bat																				+			
<i>Myotis macropus</i> #	Southern Myotis	+	+	+	+	+			+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+		+	+
<i>Nyctophilus geoffroyi</i>	Lesser Long-eared Bat														+	+	+	+			+			
<i>Nyctophilus gouldii</i>	Gould's Long-eared Bat												+		+	+	+	+	+		+			
<i>Nyctophilus sp.</i>	Unidentified Long-eared Bat	+	+	+	+		+		+	+	+		+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+		+	+
<i>Pteropus poliocephalus</i> #	Grey-headed Flying-fox						+		+	+	+	+			+		+		+	+	+		+	
<i>Rhinolophus megaphyllus</i>	Eastern Horseshoe Bat				+		+	+		+		+			+		+	+		+		+	+	+
<i>Saccolaimus flaviventris</i> #	Yellow-bellied Sheath-tail Bat	+	+	+	+		+									+					+			
<i>Scoteanax rueppellii</i> #	Greater Broad-nosed Bat		+	+		+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+			+	+			
<i>Scotorepens balstoni</i>	Inland Broad-nosed Bat			+									+											
<i>Scotorepens orion</i>	Eastern Broad-nosed Bat	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+				+	+	+	+	+		+	+
<i>Scotorepens sp.</i>	Undescribed Broad-nosed Bat	+	+																					
<i>Tadarida australis</i>	White-striped Mastiff Bat	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+			+		+	+	+	+		+	+			
<i>Vespadelus darlingtoni</i>	Large Forest Bat		+	+					+							+				+	+		+	
<i>Vespadelus pumilus</i>	Eastern Forest Bat		+	+			+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+		+	+		+	+
<i>Vespadelus regulus</i>	Southern Forest Bat							+			+										+			
<i>Vespadelus troughtoni</i> #	Eastern Cave Bat		+	+	+	+							+		+		+				+			+



Species Name	Common Name	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<i>Vespadelus vulturinus</i>	Little Forest Bat	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+
<b>Terrestrial Mammals</b>																								
<i>Lepus europaeus</i> *	Brown Hare		+				+	+		+						+	+							
<i>Macropus giganteus</i>	Eastern Grey Kangaroo		+		+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+			+	+	+	+	+		+	+
<i>Macropus rufogriseus</i>	Red-necked Wallaby						+			+		+	+	+			+				+			+
<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i> *	European Rabbit												+	+	+	+			+					
<i>Perameles nasuta</i>	Long-nosed Bandicoot		+		+		+			+				+		+	+	+	+				+	
<i>Rattus fuscipes</i>	Bush Rat	+	+	+	+	+			+	+	+	+	+		+	+		+	+	+	+		+	+
<i>Rattus lutreolus</i>	Swamp Rat																							+
<i>Rattus rattus</i> *	Black Rat	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+		+	+	+			+		+	+
<i>Tachyglossus aculeatus</i>	Short-beaked Echidna														+									
<i>Thylogale thetis</i>	Red-necked Pademelon?										+													
<i>Vulpes vulpes</i> *	Red Fox																+							
<i>Wallabia bicolor</i>	Swamp Wallaby			+	+	+				+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+		+	+
<b>Arboreal mammals</b>		4	7	5	6	5	4	4	5	4	3	5	4	4	4	4	5	3	3	2	5	3	4	3
<b>Bats</b>		12	17	17	14	12	15	13	14	15	14	13	16	12	17	17	17	15	12	15	22	15	15	13
<b>Terrestrial mammals</b>		2	5	3	5	4	5	3	2	7	5	3	6	6	4	6	7	5	5	2	5	5	5	6
<b>Total mammals</b>		18	29	25	25	21	24	20	21	26	22	21	26	22	24	27	29	23	20	19	32	23	24	22

## APPENDIX C: BIRD SPECIES RECORDED ACROSS ALL QUADRATS DURING 2001 & 2005-2023 SURVEYS

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status	2001	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<i>Alectura lathami</i>	Australian Brush-turkey														+							
<i>Alisterus scapularis</i>	Australian King-Parrot		+	+		+			+	+	+	+	+	+	+			+				
<i>Cracticus tibicen</i>	Australian Magpie		+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+			+	+	+	+
<i>Aegotheles cristatus</i>	Australian Owlet-nightjar		+	+		+		+					+	+	+		+				+	+
<i>Corvus coronoides</i>	Australian Raven		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Chenonetta jubata</i>	Australian Wood Duck				+							+	+									
<i>Alcedo azurea</i>	Azure Kingfisher														+							
<i>Geopelia humeralis</i>	Bar-shouldered Dove		+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+		+	+
<i>Zoothera lunulata</i>	Bassian Thrush		+																			
<i>Manorina melanophrys</i>	Bell Miner			+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+				+			
<i>Coracina novaehollandiae</i>	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike		+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+
<i>Monarcha melanopsis</i>	Black-faced Monarch		+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+		+	+	+	+	+	+		+
<i>Macropygia amboinensis</i>	Brown Cuckoo-Dove		+		+			+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+		+			
<i>Gerygone mouki</i>	Brown Gerygone		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Accipiter fasciatus</i>	Brown Goshawk		+																			
<i>Acanthiza pusilla</i>	Brown Thornbill			+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+
<i>Melithreptus brevirostris</i>	Brown-headed Honeyeater		+		+			+	+	+		+			+	+			+	+		
<i>Cacomantis variolosus</i>	Brush Cuckoo		+	+		+			+	+		+							+			
<i>Acanthiza reguloides</i>	Buff-rumped Thornbill			+	+																	
<i>Scythrops novaehollandiae</i>	Channel-billed Cuckoo			+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+
<i>Anas castanea</i>	Chestnut Teal					+																
<i>Coracina tenuirostris</i>	Cicadabird		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+		+	+
<i>Accipiter cirrocephalus</i>	Collared Sparrowhawk															+						
<i>Phaps chalcoptera</i>	Common Bronzewing			+															+		+	
<i>Ocyphaps lophotes</i>	Crested Pigeon				+																	
<i>Falcunculus frontatus</i>	Crested Shrike-tit		+			+		+	+	+	+											
<i>Platycercus elegans</i>	Crimson Rosella							+		+	+											
<i>Eurystomus orientalis</i>	Dollarbird		+			+	+	+				+		+	+	+		+	+		+	
<i>Artamus cyanopterus</i>	Dusky Woodswallow	V		+							+											
<i>Eudynamys orientalis</i>	Eastern Koel			+	+			+	+			+		+	+			+			+	+
<i>Platycercus eximius</i>	Eastern Rosella		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+				+	+	+	+				
<i>Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris</i>	Eastern Spinebill		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Psophodes olivaceus</i>	Eastern Whipbird		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Eopsaltria australis</i>	Eastern Yellow Robin		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Cacomantis flabelliformis</i>	Fan-tailed Cuckoo		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+			+	+	+	+
<i>Cacatua roseicapilla</i>	Galah				+	+	+	+			+				+							
<i>Calyptorhynchus lathami</i>	Glossy Black-Cockatoo														+				+			+
<i>Pachycephala pectoralis</i>	Golden Whistler		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Cracticus torquatus</i>	Grey Butcherbird		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+				+	+		+	+	+	+	+

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status	2001	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<i>Rhipidura fuliginosa</i>	Grey Fantail		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Accipiter novaehollandiae</i>	Grey Goshawk			+	+			+							+							
<i>Colluricincla harmonica</i>	Grey Shrike-thrush		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Chrysococcyx basalis</i>	Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo		+		+				+													
<i>Microeca fascinans</i>	Jacky Winter			+		+			+													
<i>Dacelo novaeguineae</i>	Laughing Kookaburra		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Myiagra rubecula</i>	Leaden Flycatcher		+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+		+	+		
<i>Meliphaga lewinii</i>	Lewin's Honeyeater		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Cacatua sanguinea</i>	Little Corella													+					+	+	+	
<i>Glossopsitta pusilla</i>	Little Lorikeet	V		+		+									+			+	+	+	+	+
<i>Grallina cyanoleuca</i>	Magpie-lark					+		+			+							+	+	+		
<i>Vanellus miles</i>	Masked Lapwing							+				+								+		
<i>Tyto novaehollandiae</i>	Masked Owl	V						+	+				+	+	+	+	+					
<i>Dicaeum hirundinaceum</i>	Mistletoebird			+				+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+		+		+		
<i>Glossopsitta concinna</i>	Musk Lorikeet										+								+		+	+
<i>Falco cenchroides</i>	Nankeen Kestrel													+								
<i>Phylidonyris novaehollandiae</i>	New Holland Honeyeater														+	+		+	+	+		
<i>Philemon corniculatus</i>	Noisy Friarbird		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Manorina melanocephala</i>	Noisy Miner					+	+		+		+				+				+	+	+	+
<i>Oriolus sagittatus</i>	Olive-backed Oriole		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+		
<i>Aviceda subcristata</i>	Pacific Baza											+			+							
<i>Anas superciliosa</i>	Pacific Black Duck					+								+								
<i>Turnix varius</i>	Painted Button-quail							+														
<i>Geopelia striata</i>	Peaceful Dove						+		+	+							+					
<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Peregrine Falcon											+			+					+		
<i>Centropus phasianinus</i>	Pheasant Coucal													+								
<i>Cracticus nigrogularis</i>	Pied Butcherbird			+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+		+		+	+	+		+		+
<i>Strepera graculina</i>	Pied Currawong		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Ninox strenua</i>	Powerful Owl	V	+	+	+	+	+		+	+			+	+		+	+	+		+		+
<i>Trichoglossus haematodus</i>	Rainbow Lorikeet			+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Anthochaera carunculata</i>	Red Wattlebird															+	+			+		
<i>Neochmia temporalis</i>	Red-browed Finch		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+		+	+	+	+
<i>Petroica rosea</i>	Rose Robin			+	+	+		+	+		+					+	+			+		
<i>Rhipidura rufifrons</i>	Rufous Fantail		+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+		+		+	
<i>Pachycephala rufiventris</i>	Rufous Whistler		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+			+		
<i>Todiramphus sanctus</i>	Sacred Kingfisher		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Ptilonorhynchus violaceus</i>	Satin Bowerbird									+						+	+	+				
<i>Myiagra cyanoleuca</i>	Satin Flycatcher		+					+														
<i>Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus</i>	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet						+											+	+		+	+
<i>Myzomela sanguinolenta</i>	Scarlet Honeyeater		+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+
<i>Chrysococcyx lucidus</i>	Shining-Bronze Cuckoo			+			+		+	+						+	+					
<i>Zosterops lateralis</i>	Silveryeye		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status	2001	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<i>Tyto tenebricosa</i>	Sooty Owl	V	+												+							
<i>Ninox novaeseelandiae</i>	Southern Boobook		+					+								+	+					
<i>Pardalotus punctatus</i>	Spotted Pardalote		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Cinclosoma punctatum</i>	Spotted Quail-thrush		+		+	+	+	+	+		+											
<i>Threskiornis spinicollis</i>	Straw-necked Ibis					+																
<i>Pardalotus striatus</i>	Striated Pardalote			+	+	+	+											+		+		
<i>Acanthiza lineata</i>	Striated Thornbill		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Cacatua galerita</i>	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo					+									+			+	+			
<i>Malurus cyaneus</i>	Superb Fairy-wren		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Podargus strigoides</i>	Tawny Frogmouth					+										+	+	+			+	+
<i>Lopholaimus antarcticus</i>	Topknot Pigeon		+																			
<i>Daphoenositta chrysoptera</i>	Varied Sittella	V		+			+		+				+									
<i>Malurus lamberti</i>	Variegated Fairy-wren		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+		+
<i>Aquila audax</i>	Wedge-tailed Eagle														+							
<i>Hirundo neoxena</i>	Welcome Swallow			+								+		+								
<i>Sericornis frontalis</i>	White-browed Scrubwren		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Phylidonyris niger</i>	White-cheeked Honeyeater												+					+		+	+	+
<i>Lichenostomus leucotis</i>	White-eared Honeyeater																	+				
<i>Melithreptus lunatus</i>	White-naped Honeyeater		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+				+	+	+	+		
<i>Gerygone albogularis</i>	White-throated Gerygone					+		+			+				+	+	+					
<i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i>	White-throated Needletail													+			+					
<i>Eurostopodus mystacalis</i>	White-throated Nightjar		+		+		+	+				+					+					
<i>Cormobates leucophaeus</i>	White-throated Treecreeper		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Corcorax melanorhamphos</i>	White-winged Chough				+			+								+						
<i>Rhipidura leucophrys</i>	Willie Wagtail							+							+						+	
<i>Leucosarcia picata</i>	Wonga Pigeon					+		+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Acanthiza nana</i>	Yellow Thornbill			+	+	+			+		+		+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Lichenostomus chrysops</i>	Yellow-faced Honeyeater		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Calyptorhynchus funereus</i>	Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo					+		+									+					
<i>Sericornis citreogularis</i>	Yellow-throated Scrubwren															+	+				+	
<b>Total Species</b>			<b>53</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>46</b>

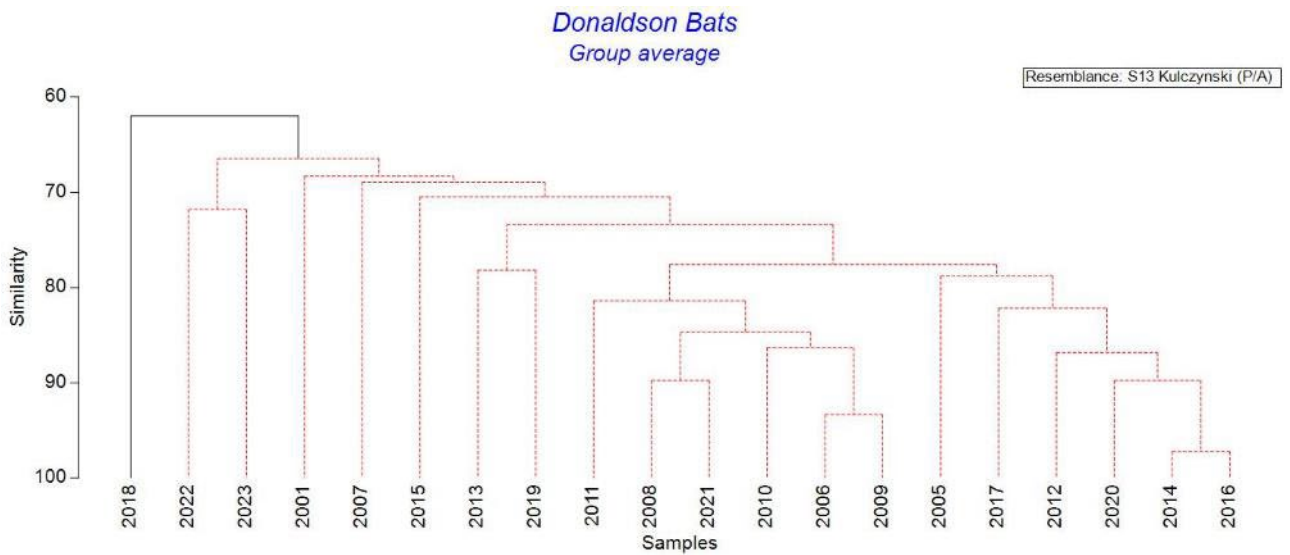
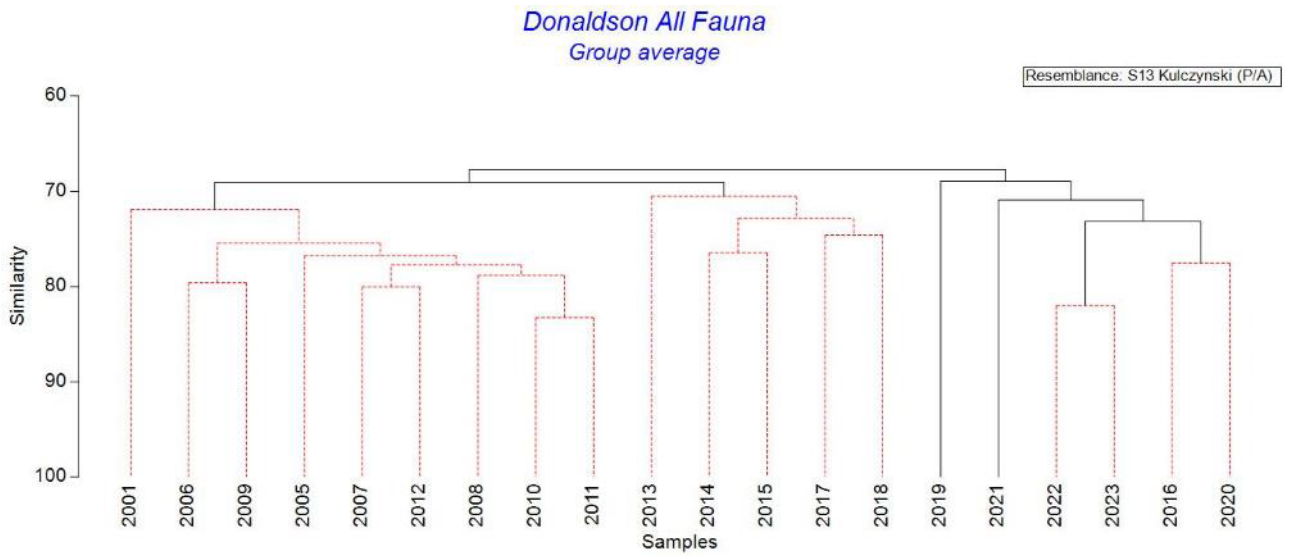
Status: V = Threatened (Vulnerable) under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (NSW)

## APPENDIX D: AMPHIBIAN AND REPTILE SPECIES RECORDED ACROSS ALL QUADRATS 2009 - 2023

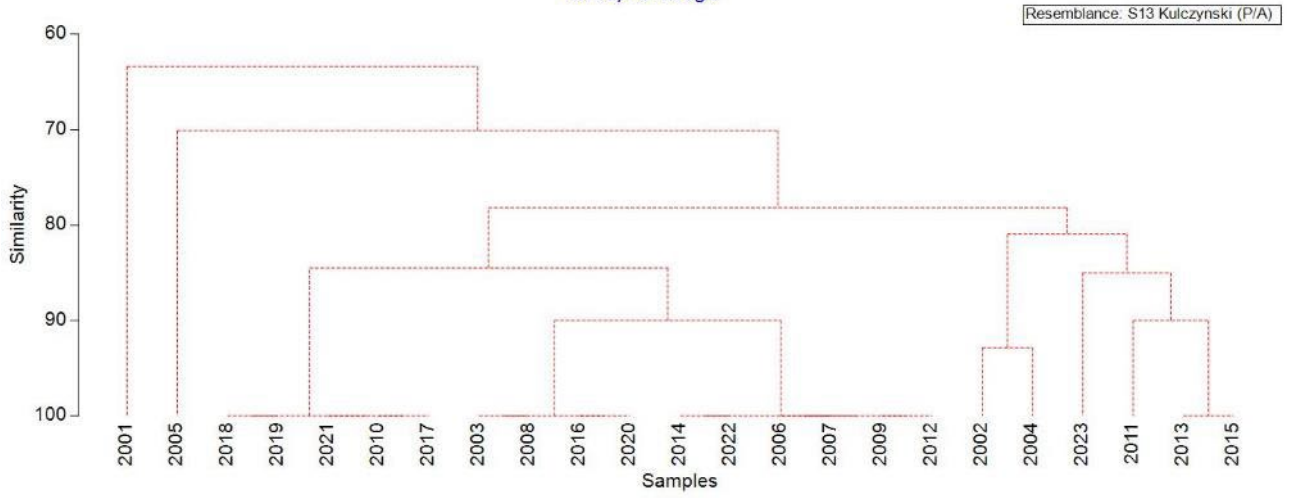
Scientific name	Common name	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<i>Adelotus brevis</i>	Tusked Frog					+	+	+	+	+			+		+	
<i>Crinia signifera</i>	Common Toadlet			+		+	+	+	+	+			+	+	+	+
<i>Limnodynastes peronii</i>	Striped Marsh Frog			+		+		+	+				+			
<i>Limnodynastes tasmaniensis</i>	Spotted Grass Frog					+					+		+	+		
<i>Litoria fallax</i>	Sedge Frog	+				+	+	+				+	+		+	+
<i>Litoria latopalmata</i>	Broad-palmed Frog	+				+			+	+	+		+			
<i>Litoria peronii</i>	Emerald-spotted Tree Frog	+						+	+	+						+
<i>Litoria revelata</i>	Revealed Frog					+										
<i>Litoria tyleri</i>	Tyler's Tree Frog					+		+	+							
<i>Pseudophryne bibronii</i>	Bibron's Toadlet					+										
<i>Pseudophryne coriacea</i>	Red-backed Toadlet			+		+	+	+	+		+		+	+	+	+
<i>Uperoleia fusca</i>	Dusky Toadlet															+
<i>Uperoleia laevigata</i>	Eastern Toadlet									+						
<b>Total</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>Amphibolurus muricatus</i>	Jacky Lizard	+														
<i>Anilius nigrescens</i>	Blackish Blind Snake												+			
<i>Dendrelaphis punctulata</i>	Green Tree Snake	+														
<i>Demansia psammophis</i>	Yellow-faced Whipsnake											+				
<i>Furina diadema</i>	Red-naped Snake	+														

Scientific name	Common name	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<i>Hemisphaeriodon gerrardii</i>	Pink-tongued Skink							+								
<i>Intellagama lesueurii</i>	Eastern Water Dragon							+	+	+			+	+		
<i>Lampropholis delicata</i>	Delicate Skink							+	+							
<i>Morelia spilota spilota</i>	Diamond Python						+									+
<i>Pogona barbata</i>	Eastern Bearded Dragon												+			+
<i>Pseudechis porphyriacus</i>	Red-bellied Black Snake								+		+	+			+	
<i>Pseudonaja textilis</i>	Eastern Brown Snake							+								
<i>Varanus varius</i>	Lace Monitor	+					+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<b>Total</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>

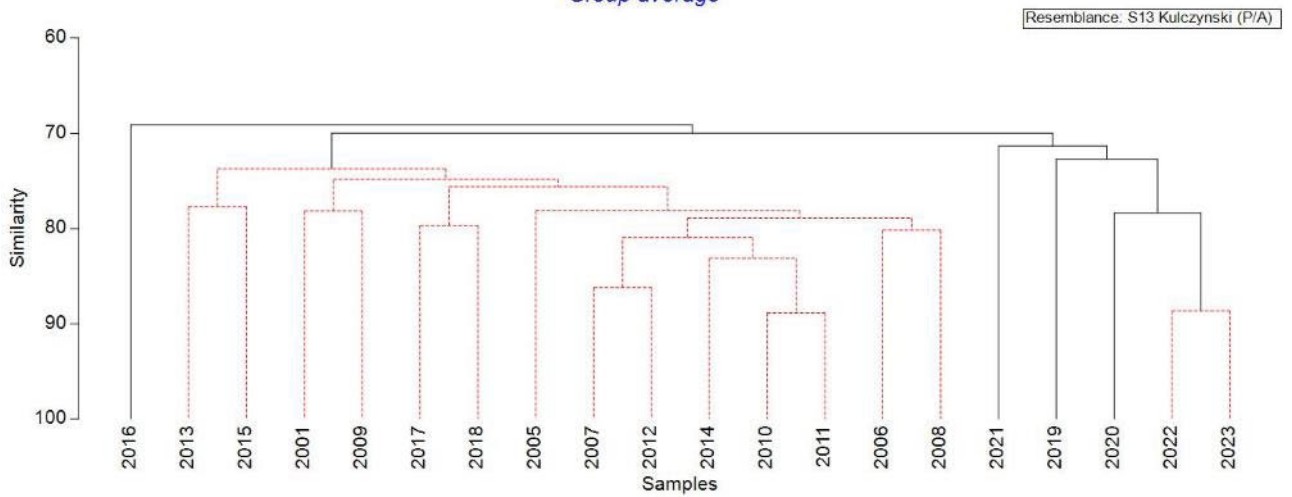
# APPENDIX E: CLUSTER ANALYSIS DENDROGRAMS AND SIMPROF RESULTS



*Donaldson Aboreal  
Group average*



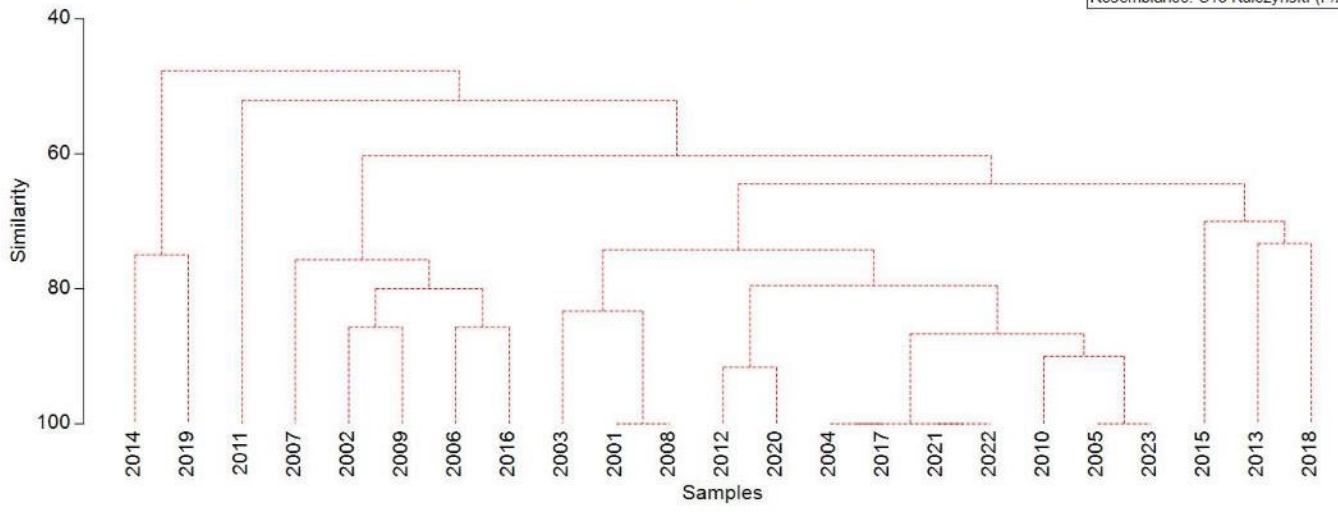
*Donaldson Birds  
Group average*





Donaldson Terrestrial  
Group average

Resemblance: S13 Kulczynski (P/A)



## APPENDIX F: PHOTOS - FAUNA

---



**Plate 2: Glossy Black-Cockatoos (*Calyptorhynchus lathamii*)**



**Plate 3: Sugar Glider nest in new nest box**



**Plate 4: Gould's Long-eared Bat (*Nyctophilus gouldii*)**



**Plate 5: Southern Myotis (*Myotis macropus*)**



**Plate 6:**        **Red-backed Toadlet (*Pseudophryne coriacea*)**



**Plate 7**

**Diamond Python (*Morelia spilota*)**

## **APPENDIX G: STAFF CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS**

The following staff were involved in the compilation of this report.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Title/Experience</b>	<b>Contribution</b>
Jake Mauger	BEnvSc & Mgt	Junior Ecologist	Flora surveys, Report Writing
Nigel Fisher	BSc (Hons) PhD	Senior Ecologist	Fauna Surveys, Report Review
Debbie Plunkett	-	Junior Ecologist	Flora surveys
Rachel Neal	BBSc	Junior Ecologist	Fauna/Flora Surveys
Mark Dean	BEnvSc & Mgt	Senior Ecologist (Zoology)	Fauna surveys

# 2024 Annual Winter Monitoring Donaldson Open-Cut Coal Mine, Beresfield, NSW



Review 2

20 December 2024

## 2024 Annual Winter Monitoring Donaldson Open-Cut Coal Mine, Beresfield, NSW

### REPORT PREPARED FOR:

Yancoal Australia Ltd  
1132 John Renshaw Drive  
Black Hill, NSW, 2322

### REPORT PREPARED BY:

#### WEDGETAIL PROJECT CONSULTING PTY LTD

27 Groves Road  
Bennett's Green, NSW 2290

ABN: 93 640 388 683

*File Ref: DonaldsonWinMon\_V2Final*

#### Version Control

Rev. No.	Revision Date	Author / Position	Reviewer	Details
Rev 1	12 August 2024	Olivia Szekelyhidy Ecologist	Mark Dean Senior Ecologist	Draft for Client review
Rev 2	20 December 2024	Olivia Szekelyhidy Ecologist	Mark Dean Senior Ecologist	Final

Only Yancoal Australia Ltd, its designated representatives or relevant statutory authorities may use this document and only for the specific purpose for which this submission was prepared. It should not be otherwise referenced without permission.



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

---

*Findings of the 2024 annual quadrat monitoring survey are presented in this document in accordance with Section 5.1 Monitoring Program of the Donaldson Coal Flora and Fauna Management Plan (F&FMP). Data collected biannually since 2001 have been analysed to investigate trends in fauna species composition over time.*

*The 2024 survey detected a total of 66 fauna species consisting of 42 bird, 19 mammals and five amphibian species. Of these, Large Bent-wing Bat (*Miniopterus orianae*), Southern Myotis (*Myotis macropus*), Yellow-bellied Sheath-tail-bat (*Saccolaimus flaviventris*), Little Bentwing-Bat (*Miniopterus australis*) Eastern Cave Bat (*Vespadelus troughtoni*) and Powerful Owl (*Ninox strenua*) are listed as Vulnerable under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (NSW).*

*Nest box surveys in 2024 (winter average) saw 55.1% of all available boxes showing signs of use (both actual animals present and evidence of usage). Nest box utilisation has decreased from the previous winter surveys of 68.3% to 57.7% in 2024.*

*Overall results conclude that there has been minimal impact to fauna diversity within the Donaldson Bushland Conservation Area (BCA) over the last 20 years. Fluctuations in ecological diversity across all quadrats have been observed which are consistent with natural ecosystem functioning, weather patterns and the changing nature of the adjoining habitat, resulting from past mining activities and neighbouring development.*

## Contents

<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 COMPLIANCE WITH THE F&FMP .....	1
<b>2. METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>3. RESULTS</b> .....	<b>4</b>
3.1 QUADRAT MONITORING .....	4
3.2 NEST BOXES .....	8
<b>4. DISCUSSION</b> .....	<b>11</b>
4.1 FAUNA .....	11
4.2 NEST BOXES .....	11
<b>5. RECOMENDATIONS</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>6. REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>13</b>

## Figures

Figure 1: Extent of the Donaldson Open-cut coal mine and the location of the nine permanent monitoring quadrats .....	2
Figure 2: Average species diversity across all quadrats during winter surveys from 2010 to 2024 at Donaldson Coal .....	7
Figure 3: Species diversity detected across all quadrats during winter surveys from 2010 to 2024 at Donaldson Coal mine .....	7
Figure 4: Available nest boxes 2005 – 2024 .....	9
Figure 5: Nest Box utilisation 2005-2024 (Winter) .....	10

## Tables

Table 1: Methodology .....	3
Table 2: Results of the 2024 winter monitoring surveys .....	4
Table 3: Sample effort and weather conditions during the survey period .....	16

## Plates

Plate 1: Sugar Glider x 3-4 .....	14
Plate 2: Evidence of use, likely <i>Antechinus</i> sp. ....	14
Plate 3: Bowl shape in leaves, likely Sugar Glider .....	15
Plate 4: Woodchip disturbance, likely Brushtail Possum .....	15

## Appendices

Appendix A: PHOTOS - FAUNA .....	14
Appendix B: Weather Conditions and Survey Effort .....	16
Appendix C: Staff Contributions and Qualifications .....	17

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Yancoal Australia Ltd operated Donaldson Coal Open Cut Mine from 2001 until 2013, when operations ceased due to the exhaustion of resources. Donaldson Coal is located on a mining lease near Beresfield in the Lower Hunter Valley, NSW (**Figure 1**). As part of the Conditions of Consent, a Flora and Fauna Management Plan (F&FMP) was prepared prior to the commencement of operations (Gunninah, 2000) with subsequent revisions made by EcoBiological in 2007.

The F&FMP prescribes the approach and the frequency of monitoring of the remnant bushland surrounding the mine disturbance area, referred to hereafter as the Bushland Conservation Area (BCA). Regular monitoring activities are conducted at nine permanently established 20 x 20 m quadrats positioned across the mining lease (**Figure 1**). A Baseline Report (Barker Harle 2001) was prepared at the commencement of mining activities and each year since, to monitor the impact of mining activities on flora and fauna at the mine.

This report presents the winter results for the 2024 Donaldson Coal Open Cut Coal Mine Annual Fauna Monitoring Program. A thorough analysis of all data collected during winter and summer surveys will be given in the 2024 Annual Report.

### **1.1 COMPLIANCE WITH THE F&FMP**

The nine permanent quadrats were established in accordance with Section 5.1 Monitoring Program in the F&FMP. One of the permanent quadrats was to be established downstream of the mine in Woodbury Swamp, however this location was not situated within Donaldson Coal's mining lease. In consultation with the Donaldson Environmental Officer (EO) it was decided not to establish this quadrat. In 2003, Quadrat 9 was established in an area of bushland of similar type to that originally found over the pit area.

The Baseline Report (Barker Harle 2001) prepared to fulfil part of the requirements of Section 5.0 of the F&FMP provides a detailed discussion of the program requirements. During initial discussions with the Donaldson EO, it was decided that the program requirements could be met by a very detailed annual assessment and a quarterly general inspection of each quadrat for any significant change. In 2004, winter fauna monitoring methods were changed from trapping to artificial nest box inspection. The change was implemented as a result of poor trapping results and the high risk of mortality to captured animals from exposure to cold.

This report meets the requirement of section 6.1 of the F&FMP, specifically 'Monitoring reports which are provided biannually and summarise all monitoring activities carried out in the preceding six months and brief monitoring reports to be provided following each monitoring event'.



Created by: KBlundell  
Date: 28.07.2023



<https://wedgetail.com.au>

**Legend**

- Donaldson Coal Mine Disturbance (Pit) Area
- Subject Site
- Quadrat Locations

**Extent of Donaldson Open Cut Mine & the Location of Nine Permanent Monitoring Quadrats**

Donaldson Coal  
John Renshaw Drive  
Black Hill NSW

Figure:

**1**



## 2. METHODOLOGY

Field surveys (**Table 1**) were undertaken at nine permanent quadrats located in the vegetation buffer (known as the Bushland Conservation Area) surrounding the mine (**Figure 1**). All surveys were undertaken between 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup> of July 2024 (refer to **Table 3** for details of sample effort and weather conditions). Survey techniques followed those used previously, enabling a valid comparison of results.

**Table 1: Methodology**

Survey	Methodology
Microchiropteran Bat Detection	Passive Anabat™ detectors were placed in bat flyways for a one-hour period at each of the nine quadrats. Detectors were programmed to record the echolocation calls of passing micro bats and the identification of recorded calls was completed using Anabat Insight software and Pennay et al. 2004 as the primary reference.
Call Playback	Recorded calls of threatened owl and mammal species were broadcast by loudspeaker at each quadrat after dusk. Species calls played included: Powerful Owl ( <i>Ninox strenua</i> ), Masked Owl ( <i>Tyto novaehollandiae</i> ), Sooty Owl ( <i>Tyto tenebricosa</i> ) and Squirrel Glider ( <i>Petaurus norfolcensis</i> ).
Nocturnal Surveys	Spotlighting was carried out by two observers in the vicinity of each quadrat for 30 minutes (between 17:45 and 21:00 hours). Birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians observed or heard during the sample period were recorded.
Bird Surveys	A 2-hectare area centered on each quadrat was surveyed by one observer for 30 minutes on the morning of 29 <sup>th</sup> of July 2024. Birds detected were identified either visually, with the aid of binoculars or by call.
Nest Box Inspection	Forty-five (45) nest boxes were inspected on 23 <sup>rd</sup> of July 2024. Chew marks, hair, nests, scats or the presence of an animal in the nest box were used as evidence of nest box usage. Nest boxes that were infested with termites, wasps or bees, had missing lids or were heavily damaged, were considered unavailable for use.
Opportunistic Sightings	Fauna species observed opportunistically within the boundaries of the Donaldson Coal Open Cut Coal Mine area during the survey period were also recorded, however these species are not considered in quadrat-to-quadrat statistical comparisons.

### 3. RESULTS

Surveys were completed by two ecologists from the 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup> of July 2024. Weather conditions and the survey effort are shown in **Appendix B**.

#### 3.1 QUADRAT MONITORING

A total of 66 fauna species were detected during the 2024 winter monitoring period, including 42 birds, 19 mammals and five amphibian species (**Figure 2**). An average of 21 species per quadrat was observed during the 2024 winter survey (**Figure 3**). Of these, Large Bentwing-bat (*Miniopterus orianae*), Southern Myotis (*Myotis macropus*), Little Bentwing-bat (*Miniopterus australis*) Yellow-bellied Sheath-tail-bat (*Saccolaimus flaviventris*), Eastern Cave Bat (*Vespadelus troughtoni*) and Powerful Owl (*Ninox strenua*) are listed as Vulnerable under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (NSW).

A complete list of all fauna species detected during the 2024 winter surveys is provided in **Table 2**.

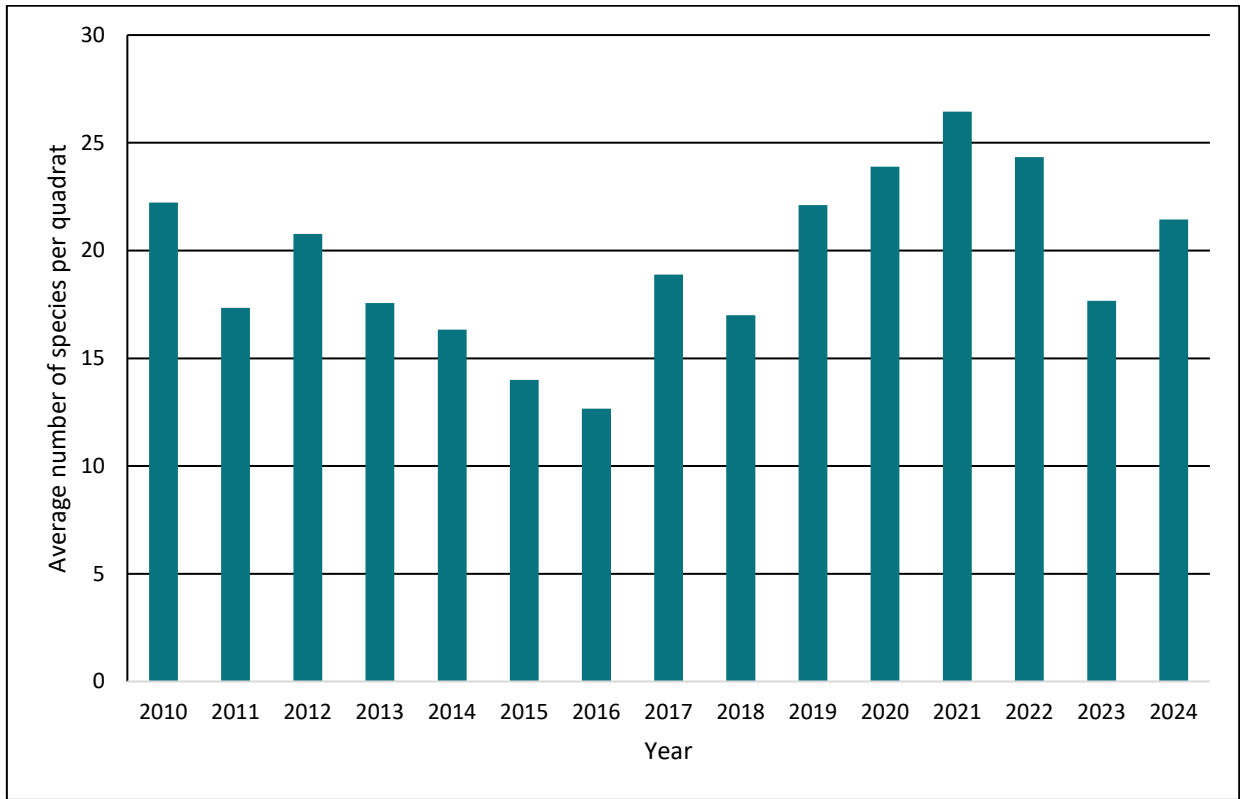
**Table 2: Results of the 2024 winter monitoring surveys**

Scientific Name	Common Name	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
<b>Aves</b>										
<i>Cracticus tibicen</i>	Australian Magpie	+	+	+			+		+	+
<i>Aegotheles cristatus</i>	Australian Owlet-Nightjar				+					
<i>Corvus coronoides</i>	Australian Raven						+			
<i>Geopelia humeralis</i>	Bar-shouldered Dove								+	
<i>Coracina novaehollandiae</i>	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike					+			+	
<i>Macropygia amboinensis</i>	Brown Cuckoo-Dove							+		
<i>Gerygone mouki</i>	Brown Gerygone					+				
<i>Acanthiza pusilla</i>	Brown Thornbill		+							
<i>Phaps chalcoptera</i>	Common Bronzewing						+			
<i>Ocyphaps lophotes</i>	Crested Pigeon								+	
<i>Platycercus eximius</i>	Eastern Rosella					+				
<i>Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris</i>	Eastern Spinebill	+					+		+	
<i>Psophodes olivaceus</i>	Eastern Whipbird								+	
<i>Eopsaltria australis</i>	Eastern Yellow Robin	+	+	+	+			+		+
<i>Cacomantis flabelliformis</i>	Fan-tailed Cuckoo		+			+		+		
<i>Pachycephala pectoralis</i>	Golden Whistler	+			+	+		+	+	
<i>Cracticus torquatus</i>	Grey Butcherbird		+		+					
<i>Rhipidura fuliginosa</i>	Grey Fantail		+		+	+		+		
<i>Dacelo novaeguineae</i>	Laughing Kookaburra		+				+			+
<i>Meliphaga lewinii</i>	Lewin's Honeyeater	+	+	+	+	+				+
<i>Phylidonyris novaehollandiae</i>	New Holland Honeyeater								+	
<i>Manorina melanocephala</i>	Noisy Miner			+			+	+		+
<i>Strepera graculina</i>	Pied Currawong			+						
<i>Ninox strenua</i>	Powerful Owl						+			
<i>Trichoglossus haematodus</i>	Rainbow Lorikeet			+	+			+	+	

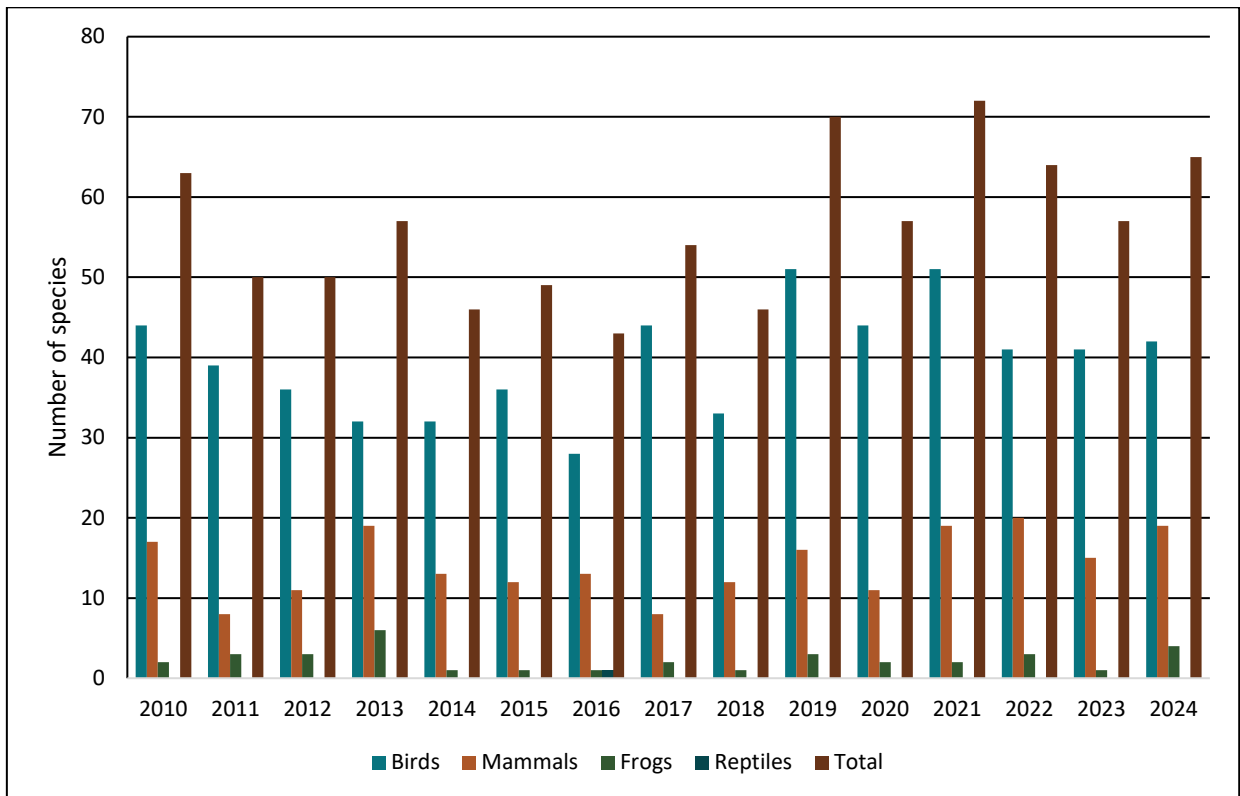
Scientific Name	Common Name	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
<i>Neochmia temporalis</i>	Red-browed Finch		+		+					+
<i>Pachycephala rufiventris</i>	Rufous Whistler						+			
<i>Todiramphus sanctus</i>	Sacred Kingfisher						+	+		
<i>Myzomela sanguinolenta</i>	Scarlet Honeyeater					+				
<i>Zosterops lateralis</i>	Silvereye	+							+	
<i>Pardalotus punctatus</i>	Spotted Pardalote	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		
<i>Acanthiza lineata</i>	Striated Thornbill			+				+	+	+
<i>Cacatua galerita</i>	Sulphur Crested Cockatoo						+			
<i>Malurus cyaneus</i>	Superb Fairy-wren	+	+		+			+		+
<i>Podargus strigoides</i>	Tawny Frogmouth				+					
<i>Malurus lamberti</i>	Variegated Fairy-wren					+				
<i>Sericornis frontalis</i>	White-browed Scrubwren	+	+				+	+		+
<i>Cormobates leucophaeus</i>	White-throated Treecreeper			+	+	+				+
<i>Rhipidura leucophrys</i>	Willie Wagtail					+				+
<i>Leucosarcia picata</i>	Wonga Pigeon								+	
<i>Acanthiza nana</i>	Yellow Thornbill					+			+	
<i>Lichenostomus chrysops</i>	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Mammalia</b>										
<i>Chalinolobus gouldii</i>	Gould's Wattled Bat		+	+		+	+	+	+	+
<i>Chalinolobus morio</i>	Chocolate Wattled Bat	+					+		+	+
<i>Falsistrellus tasmaniensis</i>	Eastern Fals Pipistrelle									+
<i>Macropus giganteus</i>	Easter Grey Kangaroo	+				+				
<i>Miniopterus australis</i> #	Little Bentwing-bat	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Miniopterus orianae</i> #	Large Bentwing-bat							+		
<i>Myotis macropus</i>	Southern Myotis				+		+		+	+
<i>Nyctophilus sp.</i>	Long-eared Bat	+			+		+	+	+	+
<i>Ozimops ridei</i>	Eastern Free-tailed Bat		+	+	+	+		+	+	
<i>Petaurus breviceps</i>	Sugar Glider							+		
<i>Rattus rattus</i>	Black Rat	+								
<i>Rhinolophus megaphyllus</i>	Eastern Horseshoe Bat				+			+	+	
<i>Saccolaimus flaviventris</i> #	Yellow-bellied Sheath-tail-bat								+	
<i>Trichosurus vulpecula</i>	Common Brushtail Possum	+	+		+	+		+		
<i>Vespadelus darlingtoni</i>	Large Forest Bat						+			
<i>Vespadelus pumilis</i>	Eastern Forest Bat	+			+	+	+	+	+	
<i>Vespadelus regulus</i>	Southern Forest Bat				+					
<i>Vespadelus troughtoni</i> #	Eastern Cave bat		+	+	+		+	+	+	
<i>Vespadelus vulturnus</i>	Little Forest Bat		+	+	+		+	+	+	
<i>Wallabia bicolor</i>	Swamp Wallaby					+				
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Amphibia</b>										

Scientific Name	Common Name	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
<i>Crinia signifera</i>	Common Eastern Froglet	+	+				+	+		
<i>Pseudophryne coriacea</i>	Red-Backed Toadlet					+	+	+		
<i>Limnodynastes tasmaniensis</i>	Spotted Grass Frog							+		
<i>Litoria peronii</i>	Peron's Tree Frog							+		
<i>Litoria verreauxii</i>	Whistling Tree Frog		+							
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>Total birds</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>
	<b>Total mammals</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>
	<b>Total amphibians</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>Total species</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>18</b>





**Figure 2: Average species diversity across all quadrats during winter surveys from 2010 to 2024 at Donaldson Coal**



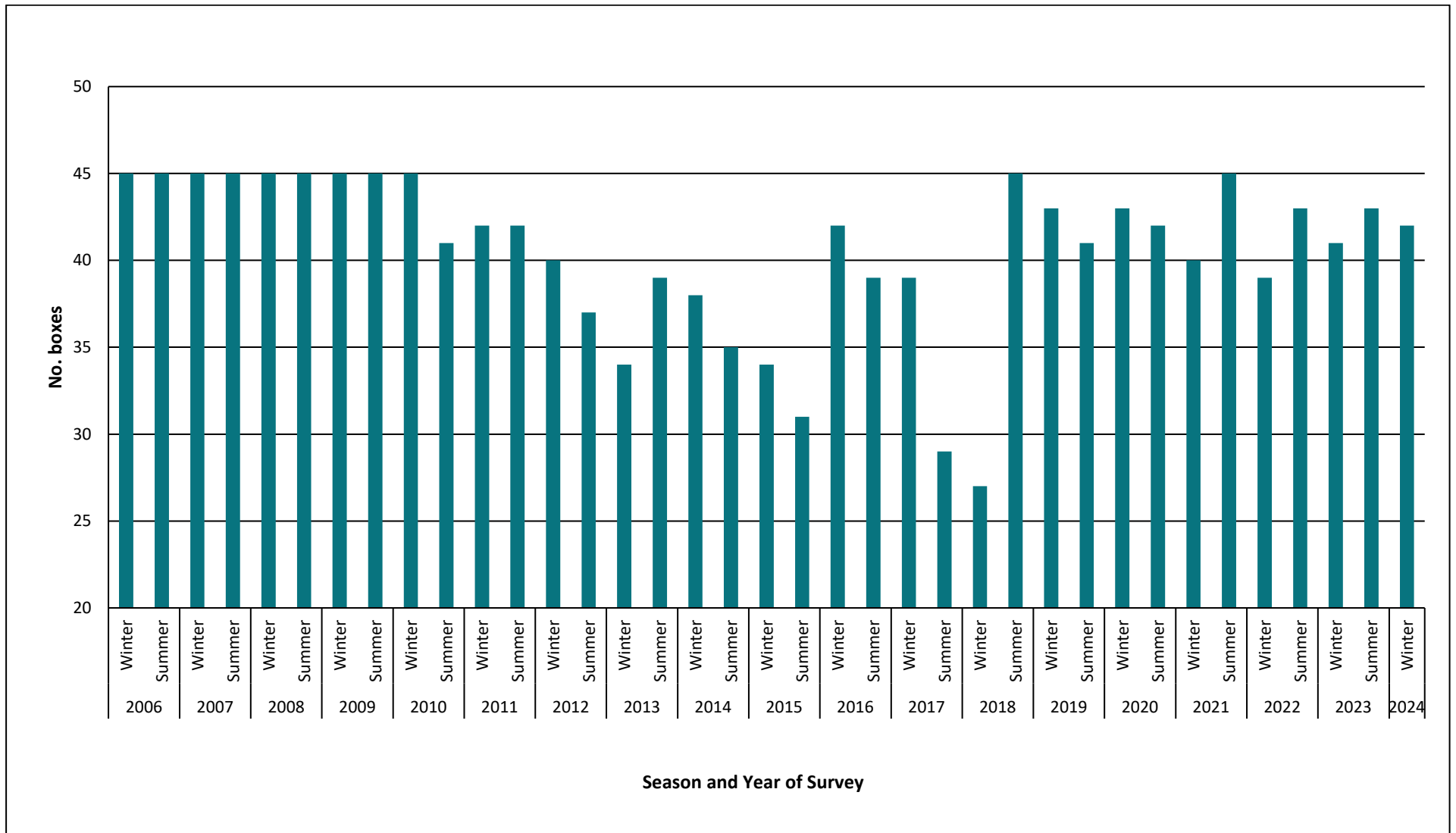
**Figure 3: Species diversity detected across all quadrats during winter surveys from 2010 to 2024 at Donaldson Coal mine.**

### **3.2 NEST BOXES**

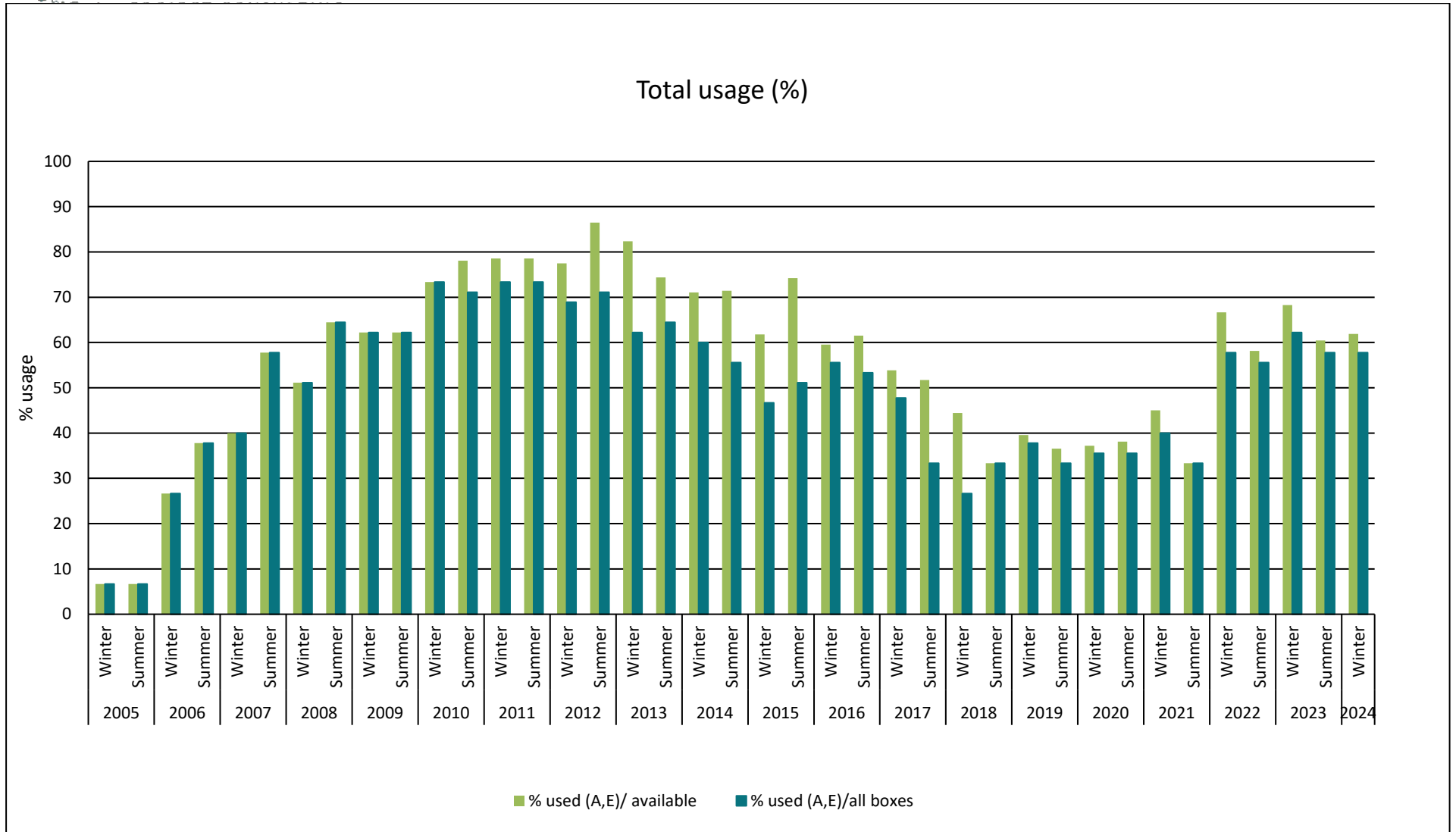
**Figure 4** shows the number of available nest boxes over time since installation in 2005, with variations due to some boxes falling into disrepair and replacement with new boxes. More recently installed nest boxes are constructed of plastic and are expected to have a longer life span compared to those constructed of plywood.

Nest box utilization decreased over the last 12 months, from the Winter 2023 surveys (68.3%) to the current survey in Winter 2024 (57.8%) (**Figure 5**). Nest box availability has remained the same since the previous year as damaged and weathered boxes have yet to be replaced and/or repaired. The percent utilisation of nest boxes has increased in the previous two years when compared to previous years' data. With large numbers of boxes being reinstalled in 2015 and 2018 it was expected that these boxes would increase in utilization in 2024. Previous survey results show that the highest utilisation rates occurred after five years from installation. This year, three nest boxes were discovered to contain sugar gliders (*Petaurus breviceps*) (**Appendix A**).

Physical evidence of fauna use was detected in 57.8% of all nest boxes in the winter 2024 surveys. Three boxes were not available for use due to deterioration of materials, with a further one nest box being utilised despite deterioration (**Figure 5**). Evidence of fauna use primarily consists of nests constructed from eucalypt leaves (indicative of glider and antechinus species). Two boxes were photographed to have sugar gliders present upon nestbox monitoring in Winter 2024. Overall, the utilisation of nest boxes has previously, and continues to, show high evidence of use within the study area.



**Figure 4: Available nest boxes 2005 – 2024**



**Figure 5: Nest Box utilisation 2005-2024 (Winter)**

## **4. DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 FAUNA**

Species diversity has increased compared to the previous year. The total number of detected species has increased from 57 species in winter 2023, to 65 species detected in winter 2024; clarifying that this trend has not impacted the long-term species average of the site. The long-term species average across all quadrats (2010 to 2024) is 56 (**Figure 3**).

In previous years there has been a progressive decline in the average species diversity detected per quadrats from 2010 to 2016, dropping to 13 species per quadrat. In recent years (2017-2021) the average species diversity has improved, peaking to 26 species per quadrat in 2021, although these improvements have not been sustained. An average of 21 species per quadrat was recorded for the 2024 winter survey, which has decreased from 26 species in 2021, and 24 species in 2022, however, is still an increase from 18 in 2023. (**Figure 2**).

Because of the increased availability of nest boxes and the increased utilisation of nest boxes compared to previous years, it could be assumed that species diversity would increase in the area. There has however been a decline in species diversity. It is possible that normal ecosystem fluctuations and changing weather patterns are cause for this impact as mining operations have ceased.

One threatened bird species, Powerful Owl (*Ninox strenua*) was detected in the 2024 winter surveys. Five microbat species listed as Vulnerable under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (NSW) were detected onsite, including Little Bentwing-bat (*Miniopterus australis*), Large Bent-wing Bat (*Miniopterus orianae*), Southern Myotis (*Myotis Macropus*), Eastern cave bat (*Vespadelus troughtoni*) and Yellow-bellied Sheath-tail-bat (*Saccolaimus flaviventris*). The Little Bentwing-bat has been regularly detected during surveys in recent years and was detected across all quadrats except for quadrat 2 (**Figure 3**). Of note, the Little Bentwing-bat typically roosts in caves, tunnels, old mine workings and buildings.

### **4.2 NEST BOXES**

The usage rate of nest boxes (percentage of available nest boxes showing signs of usage) by fauna increased in a linear fashion for the first five years following installation, after which, usage plateaued, followed by a decline. This was generally repeated for nest boxes replaced in 2018 and 2021. This pattern of nest box usage after five years of deployment has been observed in several other nest box monitoring programs in native forest (Lindenmayer et al. 2009). For the first few years after installation, reasonable levels of nest box use were recorded. These findings led to the suggestion of an 'effective occupancy time' of approximately five years for arboreal mammals. That is, the materials used in wooden nest box designs have a lifespan of only 8 – 10 years before they reach a point of decay where arboreal fauna no longer use them. It is expected that the new design nest boxes installed will have a much longer effective occupancy time with improved materials of construction.

Three nest boxes were unavailable and a further one nestbox that was being utilised despite damages due to ongoing deterioration that will either need replacement or repair by the end of the year. Ongoing maintenance (fixing broken lids and hinges and removal of undesirable species

such as termites and wasps) and replacement of broken boxes is required to ensure the ongoing success of the nest box program within the Donaldson BCA.

## **5. RECOMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are considered necessary to maintain biodiversity values within the BCA. Monitoring should continue so that trends evident in the first 20 years may be better understood and to demonstrate the fauna are still utilising the natural bushland surrounding the Donaldson Coal bushland. Nest boxes should continue to be monitored biannually to demonstrate usage. While nest boxes are being utilised, they provide a convenient means of identifying fauna occupying the area. Repairs and nest box replacements should be made as required to facilitate fauna utilisation of the area. Four nest boxes were observed to require replacement. Ongoing maintenance of nest boxes is always an issue – Donaldson Coal may want to investigate the use of hollow creation to permanently replace nest boxes.

The monitoring program indicates that the Donaldson Coal operations are causing minimal impact to biodiversity within the BCA. It is suggested that further monitoring will be required to assess cumulative impacts on biodiversity caused by other direct and indirect impacts. This will illuminate the effects of confounding factors such as the impacts of development at the eastern edge of the BCA from 2012 and the apparent increase in human activity throughout the site (mountain biking) and determine the influence of climate change and seasonal variation. Future years of monitoring should continue to analyse the diversity of specialist and generalist species separately and should focus on abundance trends of sensitive flora and fauna species, including threatened species.

The BCA is generally in good condition, but Lantana (*Lantana camara*) is increasing throughout the area. Weed control is recommended to stop the spread and reduce the density of lantana throughout the BCA.

## **6. REFERENCES**

Barker Harle 2001, Donaldson open-cut coal mine Beresfield, Quadrat monitoring program baseline report, September-October 2001, Barker Harle Pty Limited Report to Donaldson Coal.

Churchill S, 2008. Australian Bats, second edition, Allen & Unwin, Sydney.

EcoBiological 2002, Donaldson Open-cut Coal Mine Beresfield, Flora and Fauna Management Plan, Revision March 2007, EcoBiological Survey & Assessment, Gateshead, NSW.

EcoBiological 2004, Donaldson Open-cut Coal Mine Beresfield, Annual Flora and Fauna Monitoring, EcoBiological Survey & Assessment, Gateshead, NSW.

EcoBiological 2007, Donaldson Open-cut Coal Mine Beresfield, Flora and Fauna Management Plan, Revision March 2007, EcoBiological Survey & Assessment, Gateshead, NSW.

Kleinfelder 2022, Annual Winter Fauna Monitoring: Donaldson Open-cut Coal Mine, Beresfield NSW. Report prepared for Yancoal Australia Pty Ltd, November 2022.

Wedgetail Project Consulting 2023, Annual Winter Fauna Monitoring: Donaldson Open-cut Coal Mine, Beresfield NSW. Report prepared for Yancoal Australia Pty Ltd, August 2023.

Wedgetail Project Consulting 2024, Annual Flora and Fauna Monitoring: Donaldson Open-cut Coal Mine, Beresfield NSW. Report prepared for Yancoal Australia Pty Ltd, March 2024.

Lindenmayer DB, Welsh A, Donnelly C, Crane M, Michael D, Macgregor C, McBurney L, Montague-Drake R and Gibbons P, 2009. Are nest boxes a viable alternative source of cavities for hollow-dependent animals? Long-term monitoring of nest box occupancy, pest use and attrition, *Biological Conservation*, 142: 33-42.

Pennay, M., Law, B., and Reinhold, L., 2004. Bat calls of New South Wales, Dept of Environment and Conservation (NSW).

Wedgetail Project Consulting 2023, Annual Winter Fauna Monitoring: Donaldson Open-cut Coal Mine, Beresfield NSW. Report prepared for Yancoal Australia Pty Ltd, August 2023.

## APPENDIX A: PHOTOS - FAUNA

---



**Plate 1:** Sugar Glider x 3-4.



**Plate 2:** Evidence of use, likely *Antechinus* sp.





**Plate 3: Bowl shape in leaves, likely Sugar Glider.**



**Plate 4: Woodchip disturbance, likely Brushtail Possum.**

## APPENDIX B: WEATHER CONDITIONS AND SURVEY EFFORT

**Table 3: Sample effort and weather conditions during the survey period**

Date	Time	No. Observers	Temp ° C	RH %	Rain (mm)	Cloud (x/8)	Wind Speed (Km/h)	Wind Direction	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
July 23	9:00	2	9.6	86	0	-	13	WNW	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
July 25	15:00	2	22.0	42	0	-	20	NW					X	X	X	X	
July 29	9:00	2	8.7	72	0	-	24	WNW	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
July 29	15:00	2	14.8	40	0	-	20	SW	X	X	X	X					X

Weather observations were sourced from the Maitland weather station ID 061428

## **APPENDIX C: STAFF CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS**

The following staff were involved in the compilation of this report.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Title/Experience</b>	<b>Contribution</b>
Olivia Szekelyhidy	BZool	Ecologist (Zoology)	Fauna Surveys, Report Writing
Jake Mauger	BEnvSc & Mgt	Ecologist	Fauna Surveys
Claire Larkin	BEnvSc	Ecologist (Zoology)	Fauna Surveys
Mark Dean	BEnvSc & Mgt	Senior Ecologist (Zoology)	Fauna surveys, Report Review

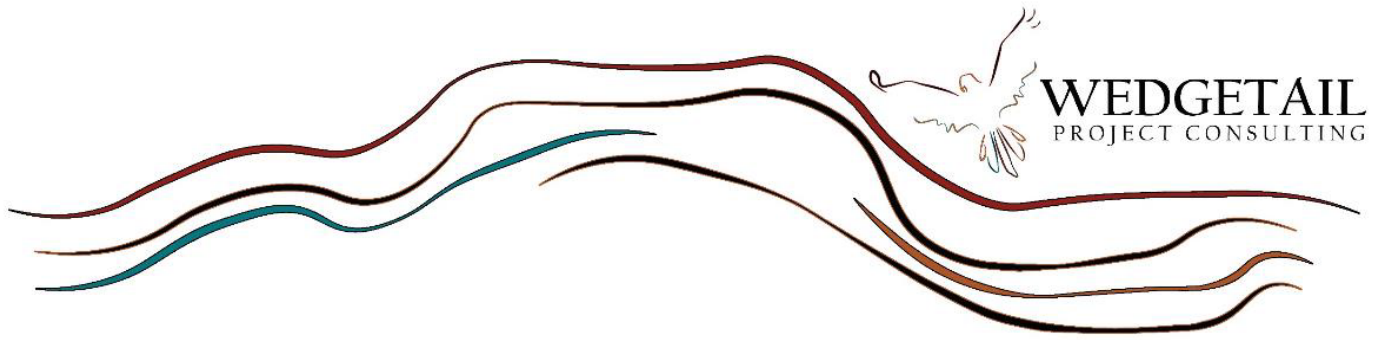
# Appendix 5

## Annual Survey of the *Tetratheca Juncea* Conservation Area 2023

prepared by

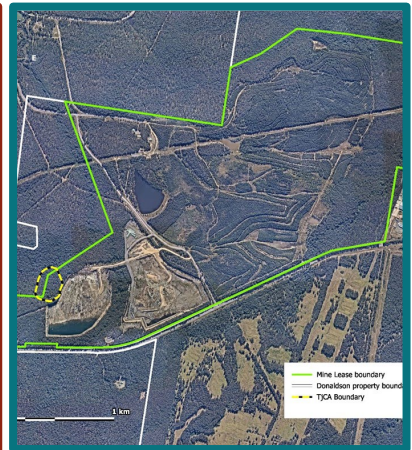
Wedgetail Project  
Consulting Pty Ltd

(Total No. of pages including blank pages = 24)

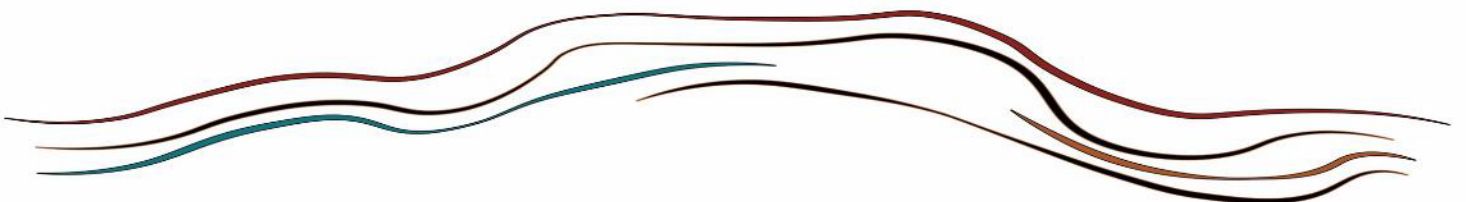


# Annual Survey of the *Tetratheca juncea* Conservation Area 2023

## Yancoal Donaldson Open-Cut



Final  
4 Mar 2024



# Annual Survey of the *Tetratheca juncea* Conservation Area 2023

Yancoal Donaldson Open-Cut Coal Mine

**REPORT PREPARED FOR:**

**Yancoal Australia Pty Ltd**

**REPORT PREPARED BY:**

**WEDGETAIL PROJECT CONSULTING PTY LTD**

PO Box 234  
Cardiff, NSW 2285

ABN: 93 640 388 683

*File Ref: DonaldsonTjReport2023\_Final*

**Version Control**

Rev. No.	Revision Date	Author / Position	Reviewer	Details
Rev 1	2 Feb 2024	Colin Driscoll Ecologist	Nigel Fisher Senior Ecologist	Draft for client comment
Final	4 Mar 2024	Colin Driscoll Ecologist	Nigel Fisher Senior Ecologist	Final

## Contents

<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION.....	1
1.2 SCOPE .....	3
1.3 TJCA POPULATION SIZE .....	4
1.4 MONITORING.....	4
<b>2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION</b> .....	<b>6</b>
2.1 POLLINATOR ACTIVITY.....	6
2.2 POPULATION DYNAMICS .....	8
<b>3. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>4. COMPLIANCE WITH THE MONITORING REQUIREMENTS OF THE TETRATHECA JUNCEA MANAGEMENT PLAN</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>5. REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>14</b>

## Figures

Figure 1: The <i>Tetralthea juncea</i> Conservation Area (TjCA) in the context of the overall mine (Image Near map December 2022).....	1
Figure 2: The <i>Tetralthea juncea</i> Conservation Area (TjCA) detail. ....	2
Figure 3: Mean fruit per clump from 2005 to 2023 (bars are $\pm 1$ s.e.).....	6
Figure 4: Mean total flowers per clump from 2005 to 2023 (bars are $\pm 1$ s.e.).....	7
Figure 5: Mean fruit-flower ratio (FFR) 2005 – 2022 (bars are $\pm 1$ s.e.).....	7
Figure 6: Mean fruit per clump versus mean flowers per clump .....	8
Figure 7: Percentage of the 100 clumps missing in each year. ....	9
Figure 8: Clump survival times.....	9

## Plates

Plate 1: <i>Tetralthea juncea</i> flowers showing the grass-like stems.....	3
Plate 2: Examples of dense ground cover at location of lost clump (vertical arrows indicate the location of the original <i>Tetralthea juncea</i> clump) (KLF, 2012).....	10
Plate 3: Example of flowering away from tagged clumps in 2023.....	11

## Tables

Table 1: TjCA Population Size Estimate .....	4
Table 2: Dates of Annual Monitoring.....	5
Table 3: Compliance with the TjCMP .....	13

## **Appendices**

Appendix A: GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF THE SURVIVAL OF INDIVIDUAL CLUMPS  
OVER TIME..... 15



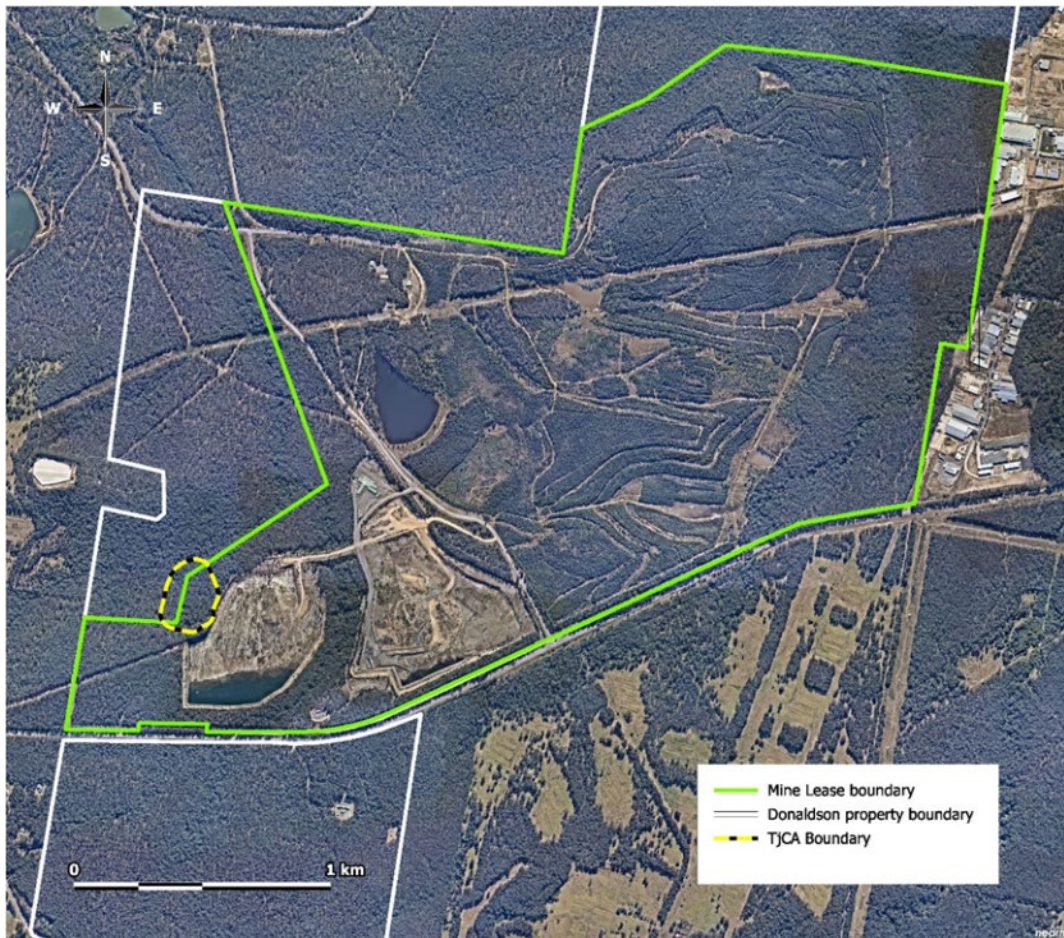
## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

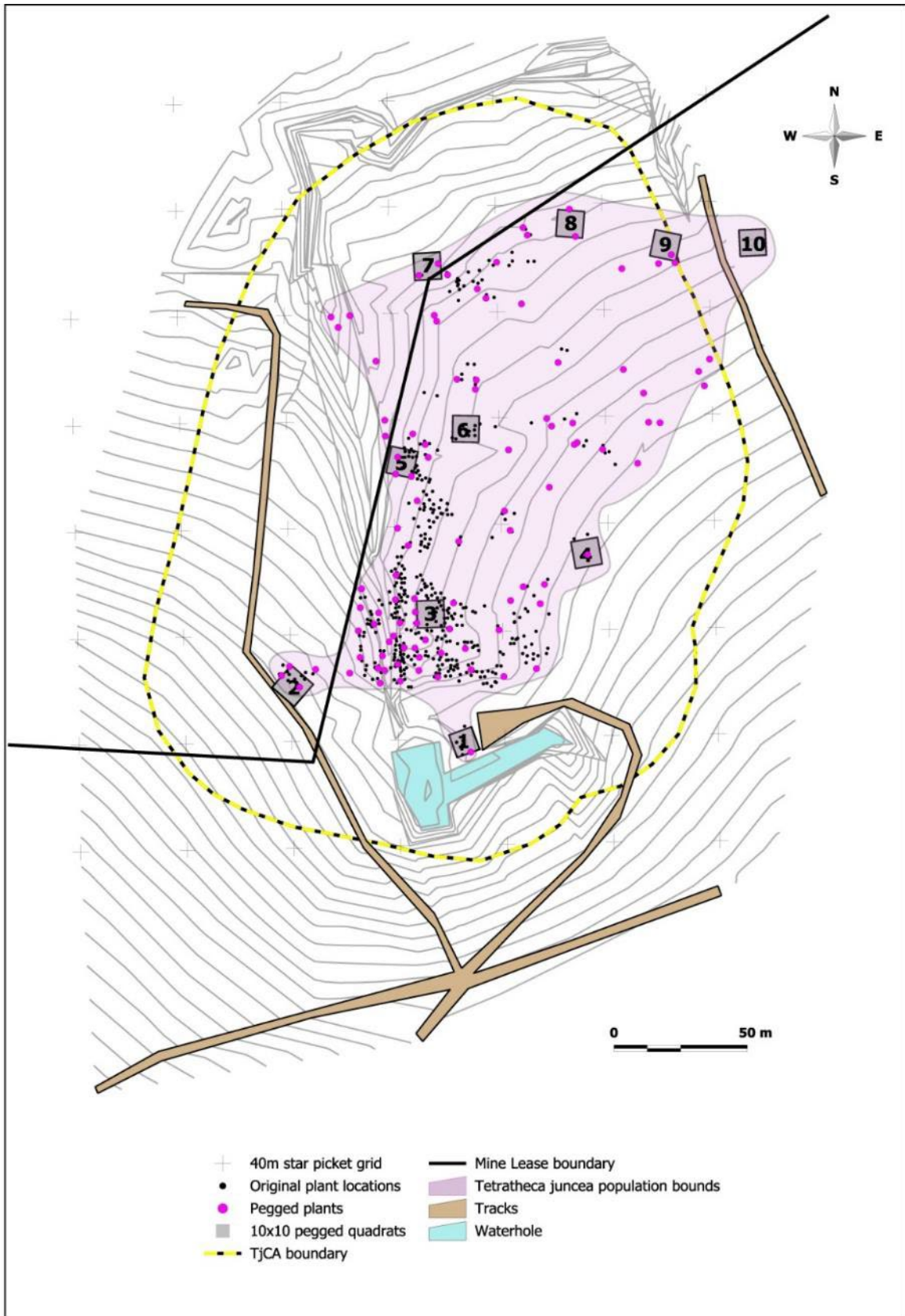
The Yancoals Donaldson Open-Cut coal mine is located near Beresfield in the Lower Hunter region, just west of Newcastle New South Wales (NSW) and operated from 2001 to 2013 when the resource was exhausted. During the initial flora and fauna investigations for the project, a substantial population of the threatened plant *Tetratheca juncea* was found to be present in about 6 hectares (ha) of land at the western edge of the lease. As part of meeting the Conditions of Consent for mining, a conservation area was established to preserve these plants in a reserve. This area is known as the *Tetratheca juncea* Conservation Area (TjCA) and the management guidelines are documented in the *Tetratheca juncea* Management Plan (TjMP) (Donaldson Coal, 2019). **Figure 1** shows the TjCA in the context of the overall mine and **Figure 2** shows the TjCA in detail.

The TjMP details management and monitoring of the TjCA in relation to mining/post-mining operations, conservation area preservation and protection as well as biological and ecological data collection.

The TjCA has been monitored annually since the baseline report by Barker Harle (2003).



**Figure 1:** The *Tetratheca juncea* Conservation Area (TjCA) in the context of the overall mine (Image Near map December 2022).



**Figure 2: The *Tetratheca juncea* Conservation Area (TjCA) detail.**

## 1.2 SCOPE

*Tetratheca juncea* Smith (Elaeocarpaceae, formerly Tremandraceae, Crayn et al. 2006) is a terrestrial herbaceous plant listed under both the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 and the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 as Vulnerable and has a ROTAP coding of 3Vca (Briggs and Leigh 1995). It is endemic to NSW with a coastal distribution from the Gosford/Wyong area in the south to Bulahdelah in the north (Gardner & Murray 1992, Payne 2000). The plant grows in disjunct populations throughout its range and there is no consensus about its growing requirements or preferred habitat. It can be found growing on Narrabeen sandstone-derived soil in open woodland amongst a low shrub understorey with grassy ground cover on Nerong Volcanics derived soil or in coastal sand woodland and heath. Putting aside the limited geographical range of the plant and limited representation in reserves, the species rarity is probably, in part, due to the fact that the plant is virtually leafless and, outside of the flowering season, is very difficult to locate amongst the grasses with which it grows. The flowering period for *Tetratheca juncea* is generally reported as being from mid to late winter through to late summer (Gardner & Murray 1992). Driscoll (2013) confirmed that budding commenced shortly after the winter equinox with flowering peaking in September/October.

The flowers of *Tetratheca juncea* grow from nodes on the leafless stem and are generally solitary but occasionally in pairs with each flower facing downward, suspended on a peduncle approximately 10 millimetres (mm) in length (**Plate 1**).

Commonly there are four petals (can be 5 – 8) ranging in colour from mauve through pink to (rarely) white. There are eight dark mauve poricidal anthers attached by short stout filaments in four pairs surrounding the carpel with the stigma protruding beyond their length. The flowers of *Tetratheca juncea*, in common with other members of the *Tetratheca* genus produce no nectar that could serve as a pollinator attractor, and it would appear that pollen is the sole reward available to an insect such as a bee.



**Plate 1:** *Tetratheca juncea* flowers showing the grass-like stems

The reproduction and propagation strategies of *Tetralochea juncea* are seed production and vegetative spread with stems sprouting from underground rhizomes. The species grows in a variety of forms, from single stems through multi-stemmed discrete clumps, to spreading patches covering several square metres. It has been assumed that clonal spread is a significant form of propagation for the species. However, recent genetic research (Jones 2011) has revealed that, even in a closely spaced population, the level of clonality was very low.

The growth form of the species makes counting individual ‘plants’ difficult and a standard method has been adopted that defines a clump as being a group of stems separated by >30 cm from the next group (Payne et al. 2002). Jones (2011) showed that genetically different individuals were growing <30 cm apart.

### 1.3 TJCA POPULATION SIZE

The TjCA occupies an area of 6.0 ha and the population of *Tetralochea juncea* lies in about 2.2 ha of that area. In 2003, a population density estimate was carried out (Barker Harle 2003) and **Table 1** shows the results. The population was divided into individually identifiable plant clumps and clonal patches where individual clumps could not be distinguished.

**Table 1: TJCA Population Size Estimate**

Category	Estimate
Clumps	476
Patches	112
Average patch size	4.3 m <sup>2</sup>
Combined patch area	453 m <sup>2</sup>

m<sup>2</sup> = square metres

This method deviated from the method of Payne et al. (2002) by the inclusion of patch size. Driscoll & Bell (2008) developed a regression relationship between patch size and the number of clumps in a patch and while the authors note that the results are not necessarily transferable to other areas, this can be used as an indicator of the total clumps in the Donaldson TjCA. Using the regression, a patch of 4.3 m<sup>2</sup> would contain 6 clumps which would extrapolate to the equivalent of 672 clumps in patches with the total population being 1,171 clumps.

### 1.4 MONITORING

Monitoring has been conducted on 100 permanently pegged clumps which represent approximately 10% of the total population. On each annual monitoring occasion (**Table 2**), the 100 pegged clumps in the TjCA were inspected with the number of flowers and seed capsules being recorded for each plant clump along with the number of surviving clumps. The sum of flowers and seed capsules gives total flowers produced by the plant and total seed capsules divided by total flowers gives a rate of conversion that indicates pollinator activity. This index is commonly referred to as the fruit-flower ratio (FFR). As used here, FFR is primarily an index of pollinator activity up to the point at which data are collected. A true FFR would be determined by counting total flowers and total fruit produced across the entire flowering season.

**Table 2: Dates of Annual Monitoring**

Year	Survey	Year	Survey
2005	22/12/2005	2014	5/12/2014
2006	4/12/2006	2015	9/12/2015
2007	19/12/2007	2016	12/12/2016
2008	24/12/2008	2017	18/12/2017
2009	9/12/2009	2018	7/12/2018
2010	21/12/2010	2019	10/12/2019
2011	15/12/2011	2020	22/10/2020
2012	15/12/2012	2021	3/12/2021
2013	9/12/2013	2022	9/12/2022
		2023	13/12/2023

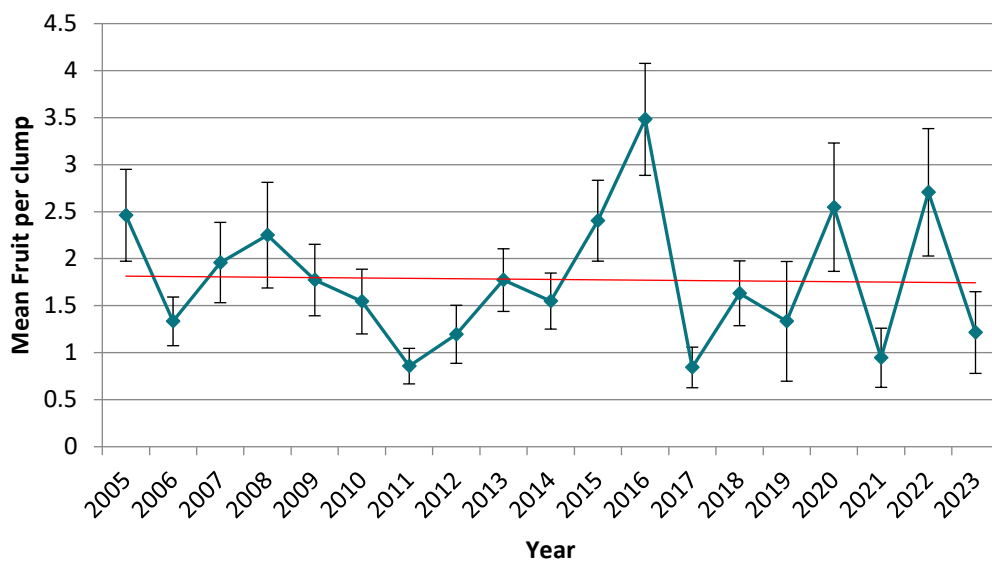
## 2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 2.1 POLLINATOR ACTIVITY

The *Tetraloche juncea* flower has no nectar and is a pollen source only for native bees to use as food for their developing young. The consequence of this is that flower fertilisation and subsequent seed capsule development is likely to be pollinator limited. This means that the quantity of seed produced is entirely dependent on the number of available pollinators. The species has in fact been shown to be pollinator limited (Gross et al. 2003). Combined with the fact that the flowers do not self-pollinate (even though the pollination system is self-compatible) the number of seed capsules produced on plants can be used as a direct indicator of pollinator activity (Driscoll 2003; Driscoll 2013).

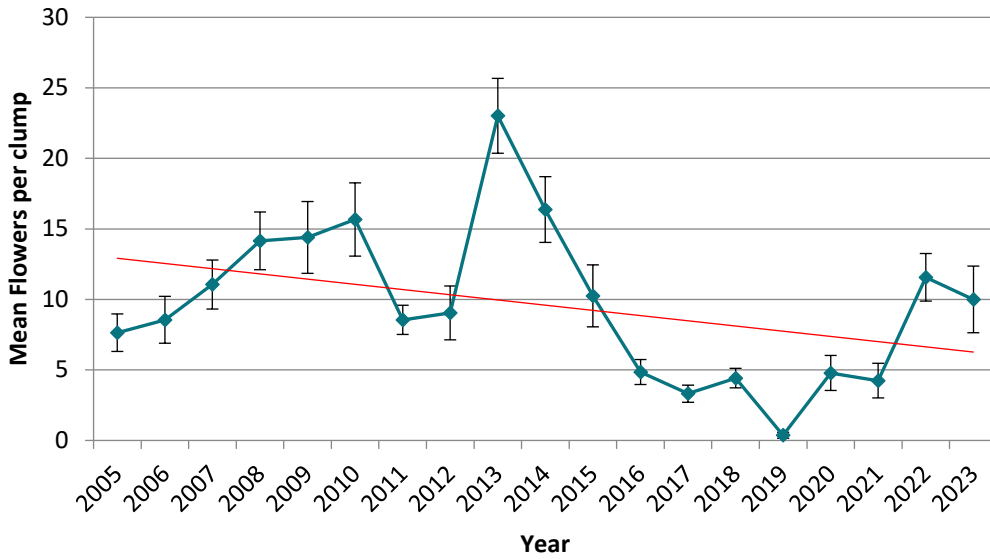
These data have been collected since 2005 so there are now 19 years over which trends can be observed.

**Figure 3** shows a plot of mean fruit per clump versus monitoring year which is characterised by high variance and wide error bars. While the trendline shows a slight decrease in fruit per clump over time this is not significant ( $R^2 = 0.00$ ,  $F_{1,18} = 0.02$ ,  $p = 0.899$ ).



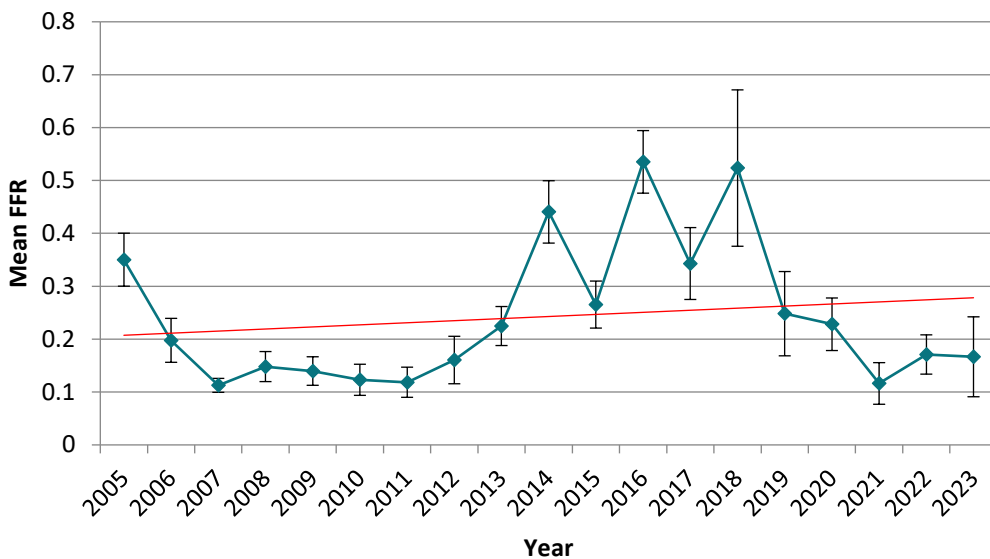
**Figure 3:** Mean fruit per clump from 2005 to 2023 (bars are  $\pm 1$  s.e.).

**Figure 4** shows a plot of mean total flowers per clump over time indicating an overall increase to 2013 followed by a steady decline. A linear regression was not significant ( $R^2 = 0.09$ ,  $F_{1,18} = 2.83$ ,  $p = 0.111$ ).



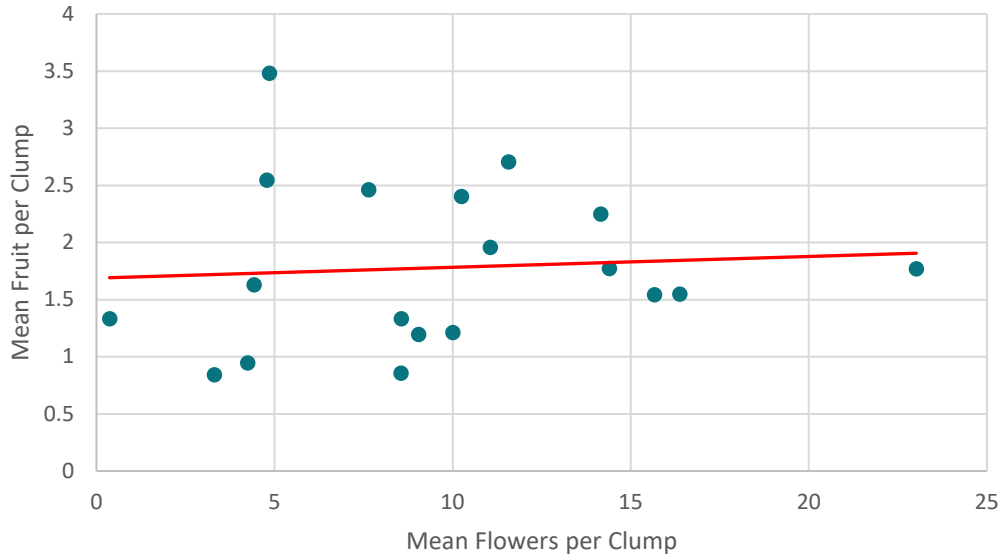
**Figure 4: Mean total flowers per clump from 2005 to 2023 (bars are  $\pm 1$  s.e.).**

**Figure 5** shows the pattern of FFR values over the 17 years. While the trendline suggests an increase in FFR over time this is not significant ( $R^2 = 0.00$   $F_{1,18} = 0.47$ ,  $p = 0.502$ ). The shape of this plot is difficult to explain other than to say that there are a number of potential factors influencing pollinator activity, particularly total available pollinators and pollen availability from all floral sources across the *Tetradthea juncea* population. Furthermore, as demonstrated in Driscoll (2013) FFR calculated in this manner is an indicative value rather than a true value.



**Figure 5: Mean fruit-flower ratio (FFR) 2005 – 2022 (bars are  $\pm 1$  s.e.).**

**Figure 6** shows a plot of mean flowers per clump against mean fruit per clump where it would be expected that if there were no shortage of pollinators, this would show an increased number of fruits with increased flower numbers. However, this was not the case ( $R^2 = 0.00$ ,  $F_{1,18} = 0.09$ ,  $p = 0.765$ ). This suggests that there are limited pollinator numbers and that numbers vary from year to year, for unexplained reasons.

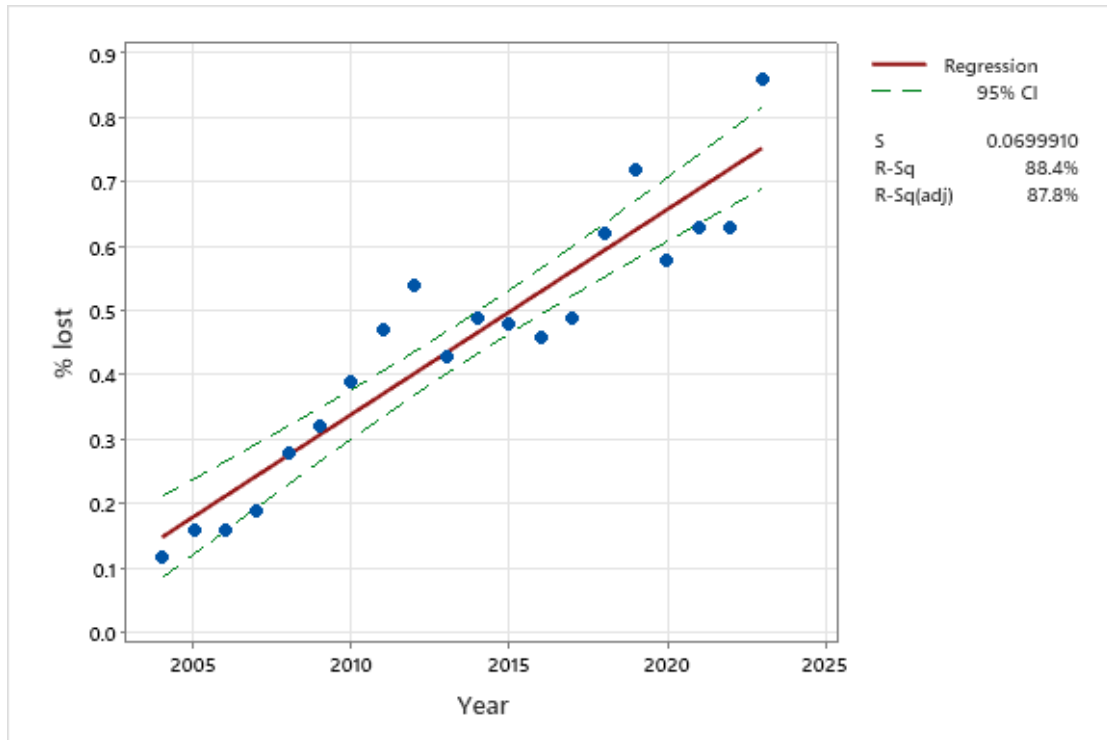


**Figure 6: Mean fruit per clump versus mean flowers per clump**

## 2.2 POPULATION DYNAMICS

Each year the number of the 100 pegged clumps missing has been recorded and the summary results from 2004 to 2023 are shown in **Figure 7**. The trendline is significant ( $R^2 = 0.87$ ,  $F_{1,19} = 137.18$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

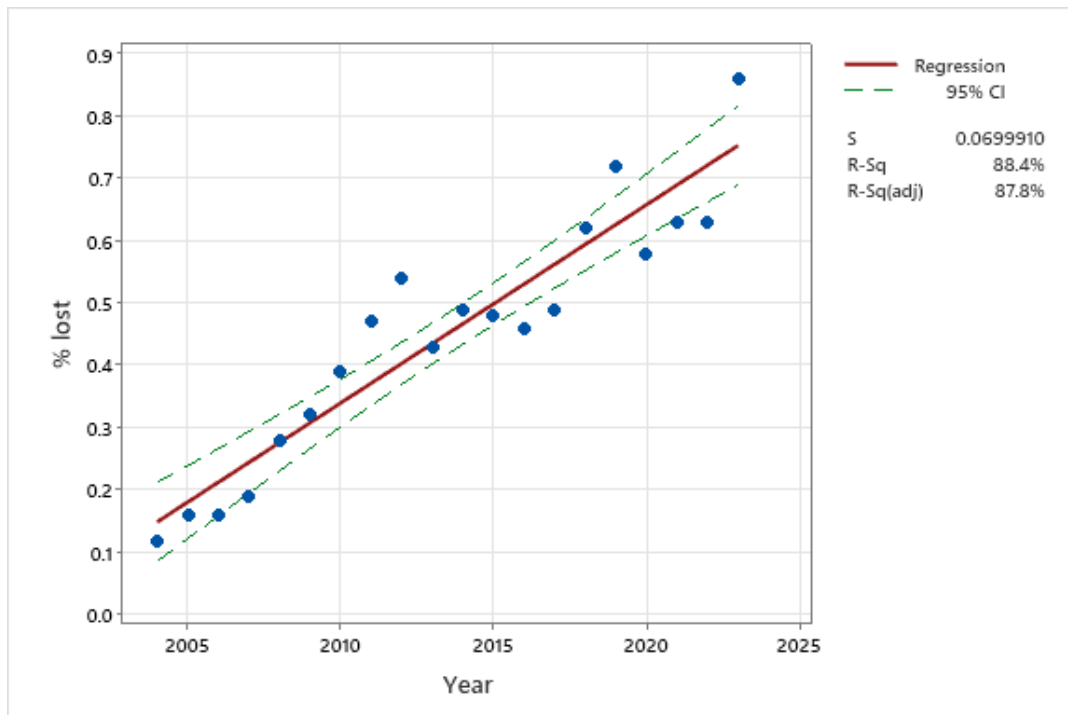




**Figure 7: Percentage of the 100 clumps missing in each year.**

**Appendix A** provides a graphical summary of the presence/absence of clumps over time.

**Figure 8** shows a summary plot of the number of years that individual clumps have been recorded with 32% of clumps surviving 15 years or more. Only two clumps have been present for all 20 years.



**Figure 8: Clump survival times.**

Kleinfelder (2012) suggested a probable cause for the continuing reduction in the population was an observed increase in the density of ground species out-competing *Tetratheca juncea* (**Plate 2**). Prevailing weather conditions may be responsible for variations in groundcover.



**Plate 2:** Examples of dense ground cover at location of lost clump (vertical arrows indicate the location of the original *Tetratheca juncea* clump) (KLF, 2012).

### 3. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The monitoring data has shown a declining population since the start of monitoring up to 2014, with a small recovery followed by a continued decline. Evidence points to *Tetratheca juncea* being outcompeted by other ground species. Overall, this report builds on previous reports in demonstrating that the TjCA population would benefit from a fire. This would both reduce the current level of competition and provide more nesting areas for tunnelling native bee pollinators.

There has been one published study by Norton (1994) and one unpublished study (Driscoll) looking at the response of *Tetratheca juncea* to fire. Both studies showed that plant clumps resprout following fire. Norton (1994) noted that fire temperature and duration of heating experienced by plant clumps

had an effect on their ability to resprout. High temperatures are likely to burn deep into the rootstock which results in the plants being killed. Driscoll (unpublished) observed that even if the main rootstock was killed, the plant could resprout from secondary roots away from the original location. Bartier *et al.* (2001) studied germination of *Tetraloche juncea* seed and found that application of smoke water resulted in a significant increase in germination rate.

As has been recommended since the 2007 annual report, it is again recommended that the TjCA be burned at an appropriate time. An appropriate time would be no later than April to take advantage of viable seed and to allow for re-sprouting during warm weather.

However, despite the lack of burning this long-term monitoring program is providing invaluable data about the dynamics of a *Tetraloche juncea* population. There is a core of clumps that have survived overall, or the majority of, the monitoring period and these give a sense of permanency to the overall population. Indeed, observations made during the course this year's monitoring show healthy flowering of clumps away from the original clumps (**Plate 3**).



**Plate 3:** Example of flowering away from tagged clumps in 2023

A broad scale analysis has previously found that neither temperature nor rainfall influence the number of flowers per clump. However, it is possible that these factors do have an effect that is lost due to the regional weather data used.

Large areas of eastern Australia were experiencing severe drought through 2018/2019. It is expected that this would have negatively impacted the Donaldson population through reduced flowering and loss of monitored clumps that were not in a strong condition prior to the onset of the drought. Drought-breaking rainfall in 2020 appeared to have resulted in recovery of 14 clumps since 2019. However, even after exceptional rainfall the 2021 records showed a declining population with low flowering. The 2022 results show flowering had increased, again likely due to increased rainfall associated with a persistent La Nina. However, flowering and seed production fell over 2022. The 2023 results are not substantially different to those from 2022, other than a sharp drop in fruit numbers. BOM rainfall data from the Maitland Airport AWS (Station Number 61428) shows that while 2023 recorded about

half the rainfall in 2023 compared to 2022 (665 mm vs 1289 mm respectively), rainfall from October to December was approximately on par with average results, although the September rainfall was a fraction of the expected average.

Again, it has become apparent that clump flagging has deteriorated to the point where there is some ambiguity about clump identification. If this monitoring is to be continued it is recommended that a surveyor be engaged to locate the original clump coordinates and clump flagging renewed.

## 4. COMPLIANCE WITH THE MONITORING REQUIREMENTS OF THE TETRATHECA JUNCEA MANAGEMENT PLAN

The TjCMP provides an outline of the changes in the TjCA that should be monitored, and Table 3.1 summarises the compliance with the TjCMP since the commencement of monitoring.

**Table 3: Compliance with the TjCMP**

Item	Compliance	Comment About Non-compliance
Demographic monitoring	Yes	-
Fire response monitoring	No	Ecological burns were recommended in the TjCMP. At that time there was no research that supports the idea that <i>Tetratheca juncea</i> requires fire for the long-term viability of the population. In consultation with the Donaldson Project Environmental Officer (PEO) it was determined that until further information was available, burns would not be conducted. Further information is now available and burning is <b>recommended</b> .
Changes in native competitors	Yes	-
6-monthly reporting	No	In consultation with the Donaldson PEO, it was determined that annual reporting only would be required with periodic inspections and any significant incidents immediately reported.
Annual surveys conducted during flowering period	Yes	This report.

## 5. REFERENCES

- Barker Harle (2003) Donaldson Open-cut Coalmine: *Tetratheca juncea* Conservation Area first annual report 2001-2003. A report prepared for Donaldson Coal.
- Bartier, F.V., Gross, C.L., Mulligan, D.R., Bellairs, S.M. and Bowen, D. (2001) Understanding the Biology and Ecology of Vulnerable Plant Species – A Case Study With *Tetratheca juncea* Occurring Over Coal Leases, ACARP Project C8012. A report prepared for Australian Coal Research. June 2001.
- Briggs, J.D. and J.H. Leigh (1996) Rare or Threatened Australian Plants - Revised Edition. Collingwood: CSIRO Publishing.
- Crayn, D.M., Rossetto, M., and Maynard, D.J. (2006) Molecular phylogeny and dating reveals an oligomocene radiation of dry-adapted shrubs (former Tremandraceae) from rainforest tree progenitors (Elaeocarpaceae) in Australia. *American Journal of Botany* 93(9): 1328–1342.
- Donaldson Coal Ltd, (2019) *Tetratheca juncea* Management Plan. Report prepared by Donaldson Coal.
- Driscoll, C. (2003) The pollination ecology of *Tetratheca juncea* Smith: finding the pollinators. *Cunninghamia* 8(1): 133-140.
- Driscoll, C. (2013) The ecology of reproduction in a rare plant - *Tetratheca juncea*. PhD Thesis University of Newcastle. Faculty of Science & Information Technology, School of Environmental and Life Sciences. <http://hdl.handle.net/1959.13/937469>.
- Driscoll, C. and Bell, S. (2008) Survey for *Tetratheca juncea* (Elaeocarpaceae) for the Morisset Structure Plan, Lake Macquarie LGA. A report prepared for Lake Macquarie City Council by Eastcoast Flora Survey.
- Gardner, C. and Murray L. (1992) Tremandraceae. In: *Flora of New South Wales Vol 3* (ed. G.J. Harden) pp. 74-78. UNSW Press.
- Gross, C.L., Bartier, F.V. and Mulligan, D.R. (2003) Floral Structure, Breeding System and Fruit-set in the Threatened Sub-shrub *Tetratheca juncea* Smith (Tremandraceae) *Annals of Botany* 92: 771-777
- Jones, A. (2011) A genetic investigation: multi-locus genotyping of *Tetratheca juncea* using microsatellite markers. University of Newcastle, unpublished honours thesis.
- Norton, A.E. (1994) Field observations into *Tetratheca juncea*. Fire regeneration and its attribution within Lake Macquarie. Unpublished report, prepared for BHP Pty Ltd.
- Kleinfelder (2012) Gloucester Coal Donaldson Opencut Annual Survey of the *Tetratheca juncea* Conservation Area 2013.
- Payne, R.J. (2000). Lake Macquarie *Tetratheca juncea* Conservation Management Plan Final Report November 2000. A report prepared for Lake Macquarie City Council, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and BHP Pty Ltd.
- Payne, R.J., Stevenson, D., and Wellington, R. (2002) A standardised method for counting Black-eyed Susan populations. Unpublished Report.

## APPENDIX A: GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF THE SURVIVAL OF INDIVIDUAL CLUMPS OVER TIME

Green = clump present, Pink = clump absent

Clump	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
1	Pink	Green	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink
2	Pink	Green	Green	Pink	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Pink	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
3	Pink	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Green	Pink
4	Pink	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink
5	Pink	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
6	Pink	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Pink	Green	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Green	Green	Pink	Pink
7	Pink	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Pink	Green	Green	Green	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink
8	Pink	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Pink	Green	Green	Green	Green	Pink	Pink	Pink	Green	Green
9	Pink	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Pink	Pink	Pink	Green	Green	Green	Green	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink
10	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Pink	Green	Green	Green	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink
11	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Pink	Pink	Green	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Green	Pink	Pink
12	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Green	Green	Green	Green
13	Green	Green	Green	Green	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink
14	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink
15	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Pink	Green	Pink	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Pink	Green	Pink	Green	Pink
16	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Pink	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Pink	Green	Green	Green	Green
17	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Pink	Pink	Green	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink
18	Green	Green	Green	Green	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Pink









Clump	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
83	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red
84	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red
85	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
86	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
87	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
88	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Red	Red
89	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
90	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
91	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red
92	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red
93	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red
94	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red
95	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red
96	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red
97	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
98	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red
99	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
100	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red

# Appendix 6

## 2023 Rehabilitation Monitoring

prepared by

Wedgetail Project  
Consulting Pty Ltd

(Total No. of pages including blank pages = 62)

# 2023 Rehabilitation Monitoring

Donaldson Open Cut Mine

John Renshaw Drive

Beresfield NSW 2311



# 2023 Rehabilitation Monitoring

Donaldson Open Cut Mine

John Renshaw Drive

Beresfield NSW 2311

## REPORT PREPARED FOR:

**Yancoal Australia Pty Ltd**

## REPORT PREPARED BY:

**WEDGETAIL PROJECT CONSULTING PTY LTD**

27 Groves Rd,  
Bennetts Green, NSW 2290

ABN: 93 640 388 683

*File Ref: 2023 Donaldson Rehab Ann Mon Rep\_Final*

### Version Control

Rev. No.	Revision Date	Author / Position	Reviewer	Details
Rev 1	8 January 2024	Debbie Plunkett Ecologist	Nigel Fisher Senior Ecologist	Draft for client comment
Rev 1	4 March 2024	Debbie Plunkett Ecologist	Nigel Fisher Senior Ecologist	Final

## Contents

<b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 BACKGROUND.....	1
1.2 SCOPE .....	1
1.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL .....	1
<b>2. METHODS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 WOODY DEBRIS .....	4
2.2 FAUNA.....	4
2.2.1 Terrestrial Mammals.....	8
2.2.2 Bats.....	8
2.2.3 Birds.....	8
2.2.4 Herpetofauna .....	8
2.3 NEST BOXES .....	8
2.4 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS .....	9
<b>3. RESULTS.....</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1 WEATHER CONDITIONS .....	10
3.2 VEGETATION STRUCTURE .....	10
3.3 FAUNA.....	16
3.3.1 Arboreal and Terrestrial Mammals .....	17
3.3.2 Bats.....	18
3.3.3 Birds.....	19
3.3.4 Reptiles.....	20
3.4 FAUNA DIVERSITY PER QUADRAT .....	21
3.5 FAUNA DIVERSITY VS WOODY DEBRIS.....	23
3.6 NEST BOXES .....	25
3.6.1 Arboreal nest boxes .....	28
3.6.2 Terrestrial nest boxes.....	28
3.6.3 Sugar Glider population.....	29
<b>4. DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>29</b>
4.1 FAUNA DIVERSITY PER REHAB AGE .....	30
4.2 FAUNA DIVERSITY VS. WOODY DEBRIS.....	31
4.3 VEGETATION STRUCTURE .....	32
4.4 TERRESTRIAL AND ARBOREAL ANIMALS .....	33
4.5 BATS.....	33
4.6 BIRDS.....	34

4.7 HERPETOFAUNA.....	35
4.8 NESTBOXES .....	35
<b>5. RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>6. REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>38</b>

## Figures

Figure 1: Locality Map & Quadrat Locations.....	3
Figure 2: Quadrats & Corresponding Age of Rehabilitation. ....	6
Figure 3: Nest Box and Fauna Quadrat Trapping.....	7
Figure 4: Number of fauna species per year from 2008 – 2023 (all quadrats combined). ....	16
Figure 5: Number of fauna species per quadrat from 2008 – 2023.....	17
Figure 6: Number of arboreal and terrestrial mammal species per quadrat from 2008 – 2023.....	18
Figure 7: Number of bat species per quadrat from 2011-2023. ....	19
Figure 8: Number of bird species per quadrat from 2008-2023. ....	20
Figure 9: Number of reptile species per quadrat from 2008-2023.....	20
Figure 10: Non-metric Multidimensional Scaling analysis of all fauna per quad after 4 years (2011) and 8 years (2015). REM (Q1) = remnant vegetation; REH1 (Q2) = rehab planted in 2003; REH2 (Q3) = rehab planted in 2005; REH3 (Q4) = rehab planted 2003. ....	22
Figure 11: Non-metric Multidimensional Scaling analysis of all fauna per quad between years 2016-2023. REM (Q1) = remnant vegetation; REH1 (Q2) = rehab planted in 2003; REH2 (Q3) = rehab planted in 2005; REH3 (Q4) = rehab planted 2003.....	23
Figure 12: Average number of terrestrial species recorded each year, per quadrat and total mass of woody debris (T/Ha).....	24
Figure 13: Non-metric Multidimensional Scaling analysis of number of terrestrial fauna species detected from 2008-2023 and its relationship to the quantity of woody debris at each quadrat. Please note that the similarity between this and figure and Figure 11 is coincidental and not a mistake.....	25
Figure 14: The percentage of total nest box usage (A+ E, useable nestboxes only) for all quadrats 2011 – 2023.....	26
Figure 15: Percentage of available nest boxes used per usage category 2011 – 2023. ....	27
Figure 16: Number of Sugar Gliders ( <i>Petaurus breviceps</i> ) observed in boxes 2011 – 2023.....	27
Figure 17: Evidence of use per nest box type 2011 – 2023 (usable nest boxes only).....	28
Figure 18: Evidence of use (%) of terrestrial nest boxes by Sugar Gliders and Antechinus, versus number of Gliders recorded (all boxes) 2011 – 2023. ....	29

## Tables

Table 1: Trapping statistics for the four quadrats combined. ....	5
Table 2: Characteristics of woody debris between and within each quadrat. ....	23

## Plates

Plate 1: Q1 – Understorey .....	12
Plate 2: Q1 Mid storey and Canopy .....	12



Plate 3:	Q2 – Understorey .....	13
Plate 4:	Q2 – Mid storey and Canopy. ....	13
Plate 5:	Q3 – Understorey .....	14
Plate 6:	Q3 – Mid storey and Canopy. ....	14
Plate 7:	Q4 – Understorey .....	15
Plate 8:	Q4 – Mid storey and Canopy. ....	15
Plate 9:	Arboreal Nest Box.....	50
Plate 10:	Terrestrial nest box.....	51
Plate 11:	Terrestrial nest box containing Antechinus nest.....	51
Plate 12:	Arboreal nest box containing old Glider bowl .....	52
Plate 13:	Garden Skink ( <i>Lampropholis delicata</i> ) .....	53
Plate 14:	Brown Antechinus ( <i>Antechinus stuartii</i> ).....	53
Plate 15:	Brown Antechinus ( <i>Antechinus stuartii</i> ), mother and young showing evidence of successful reproduction. ....	54
Plate 16:	Common Brushtail Possum ( <i>Trichosurus vulpecula</i> ) .....	54

## Appendices

Appendix A:	FAUNA SPECIES RECORDED AT EACH QUADRAT PER YEAR.....	40
Appendix B:	TERRESTRIAL AND ARBOREAL NEST BOXES .....	50
Appendix C:	NATIVE FAUNA PHOTOS .....	53
Appendix D:	LICENSING.....	55
Appendix E:	STAFF CONTRIBUTIONS .....	56

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

The Donaldson Coal Open Cut Mine (Donaldson Mine), located in the vicinity of Beresfield in the Lower Hunter Valley of NSW, commenced operations in 2001. The current owner, Yancoal Australia Ltd ceased operation of the open cut mine in 2013 following exhaustion of the resource. The Donaldson Coal mining lease is shown in **Figure 1**.

### 1.2 SCOPE

Wedgetail has been engaged by Donaldson Coal to undertake annual fauna surveys of the revegetated areas of the Donaldson Coal mining lease. The aim of the survey is to provide information on the habitat requirements of recolonising fauna and to determine the effectiveness of the rehabilitation program in re-establishing pre-mining biodiversity levels. The surveys are carried out as part of the mining Conditions of Consent.

Stage One involved baseline fieldwork and the preparation of a baseline report (Ecobiological 2008). A variation to the baseline study was approved by Donaldson Coal, adding an additional three quadrats, and incorporating an additional quadrat to target an area of rehabilitation where no woody debris had been deliberately placed. The locations of quadrats are shown in **Figure 2**.

Through the process of adaptive management, nest box monitoring was introduced in 2011 to target the monitoring of specific species: Brown Antechinus (*Antechinus stuartii*) and Sugar Glider (*Petaurus breviceps*) in relation to rehabilitation age and structure. The implementation of the nest boxes and their monitoring has provided insight into the effectiveness of the rehabilitation program and nest boxes as artificial hollows within rehabilitated sites.

Fauna surveys have been conducted annually from 2008 to 2023 and nest box monitoring annually from 2011 to 2023. This report provides results for the 16th fauna and 13th nest box monitoring surveys conducted for the 2023 report. The data for this report was collected in November 2023.

### 1.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

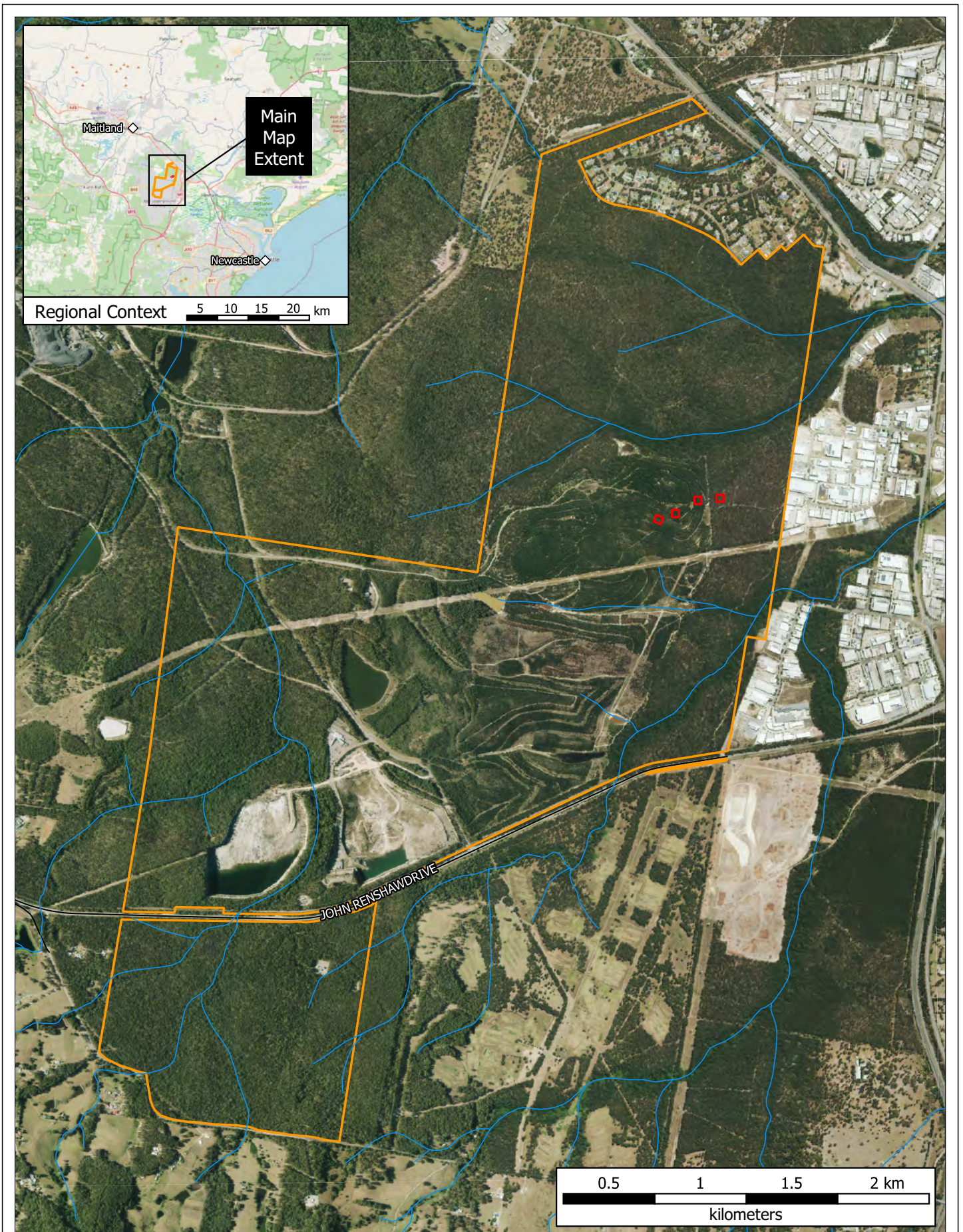
Monitoring of the Donaldson Mine rehabilitation area aims to assess the level of successful re-colonisation by native terrestrial and arboreal species into differing aged sites. A key question being 'whether the introduction of woody debris and nest boxes has the ability to successfully facilitate fauna re-colonisation and therefore act as a management tool for current and future mine rehabilitation?'

In an old growth forest, the development of a complex structure including ground cover and natural hollows is perpetual, consisting of tree growth, tree shed (branches and bark), hollow formation, tree death and ground material build up and decay. In areas that have been previously cleared and rehabilitated it takes long periods of time before the vegetation is old enough to start to produce the type of ground habitat and hollow structures required to support small terrestrial and arboreal mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and invertebrates. By designing rehabilitation to include structural elements such as woody debris, rocks and artificial hollows, the time over which a rehabilitated area can be successfully re-colonised by fauna has the potential to be greatly reduced (Ireland et al. 1994;

Carey and Johnson 1995; Loeb 1999; Butts and McComb 2000; MacNally et al. 2001; MacNally 2006; Lada et al. 2007).

Stage One of the program involved preliminary surveys and trapping within the existing rehabilitated areas containing varying quantities of woody debris and in nearby native open forest vegetation as a control. Three 40 x 40 metre (m) quadrats were used to monitor fauna species and their relocation into each of the differing aged sites. Additionally, the results from the two rehabilitated sites and the mature open forest area were compared to determine if there was a significant difference in species richness between areas containing varying quantities of woody debris.

The addition of a fourth quadrat in December 2008 was intended to enable comparison between the natural forested quadrat Q1, two rehabilitation quadrats Q2 and Q4 with varying manipulated woody debris levels and the fourth quadrat Q3 where no woody debris had been deliberately placed. Annual monitoring allows variations in fauna species richness in conjunction with the changing vegetation structure of the rehabilitation area to be assessed. The results from all four quadrats are compared to determine what effect vegetation structure and woody debris levels have on fauna re-colonisation. This information will assist with future rehabilitation design aimed at successful faunal re-colonisation.



Created by: KBlundell  
Date: 09.03.2023



<https://wedgetail.com.au>

**Legend**

- Donaldson Coal Mine Lease Boundary
- Study Area Quadrats
- Watercourse
- Arterial Road

**Locality Map & Quadrat Locations**

Donaldson Coal  
John Renshaw Drive  
Black Hill NSW

Figure:

**1**



## 2. METHODS

### 2.1 WOODY DEBRIS

Wood-load measurements from each original quadrat Q1, Q2, and Q4 were undertaken in March 2008 by measuring all pieces of fallen timber with  $\geq 8$ cm end diameters within the three 40 m x 40 m quadrats. The volume of each piece was calculated by treating pieces as cylinders and multiplying the length and mean diameter of each piece. Volumes were then converted into mass by using the mean density of 0.6 tonne/m<sup>3</sup> (Mg) (Robinson 1997; MacNally and Horrocks 2007).

The woody debris survey has not been replicated since the 2008 survey as the overall monitoring report results rely on original measurements of mean density to derive a future rehabilitation design. Quadrat Q2 and Q4 were managed for woody debris while Q3 was not. Quadrat Q1 remains as mature forest adjoining the rehabilitation area.

The 2008 procedure was adapted from studies undertaken in the Riverina region of NSW (Robinson 1997) which looked at the density and current loads of woody debris. Woody debris of similar ages was measured, and volumes calculated. The findings from this research identified that irrespective of decay status, the volume of woody debris remained at a relatively constant 0.6 tonne/m<sup>3</sup>. This procedure was also undertaken for the additional quadrat Q3 added in December 2008.

Re-colonisation results, in conjunction with initial woody debris levels provides information on the potential threshold required to facilitate successful re-colonisation by fauna species in terms of suitable habitat structure. Any new debris would be a result of natural decay and ecological process.

### 2.2 FAUNA

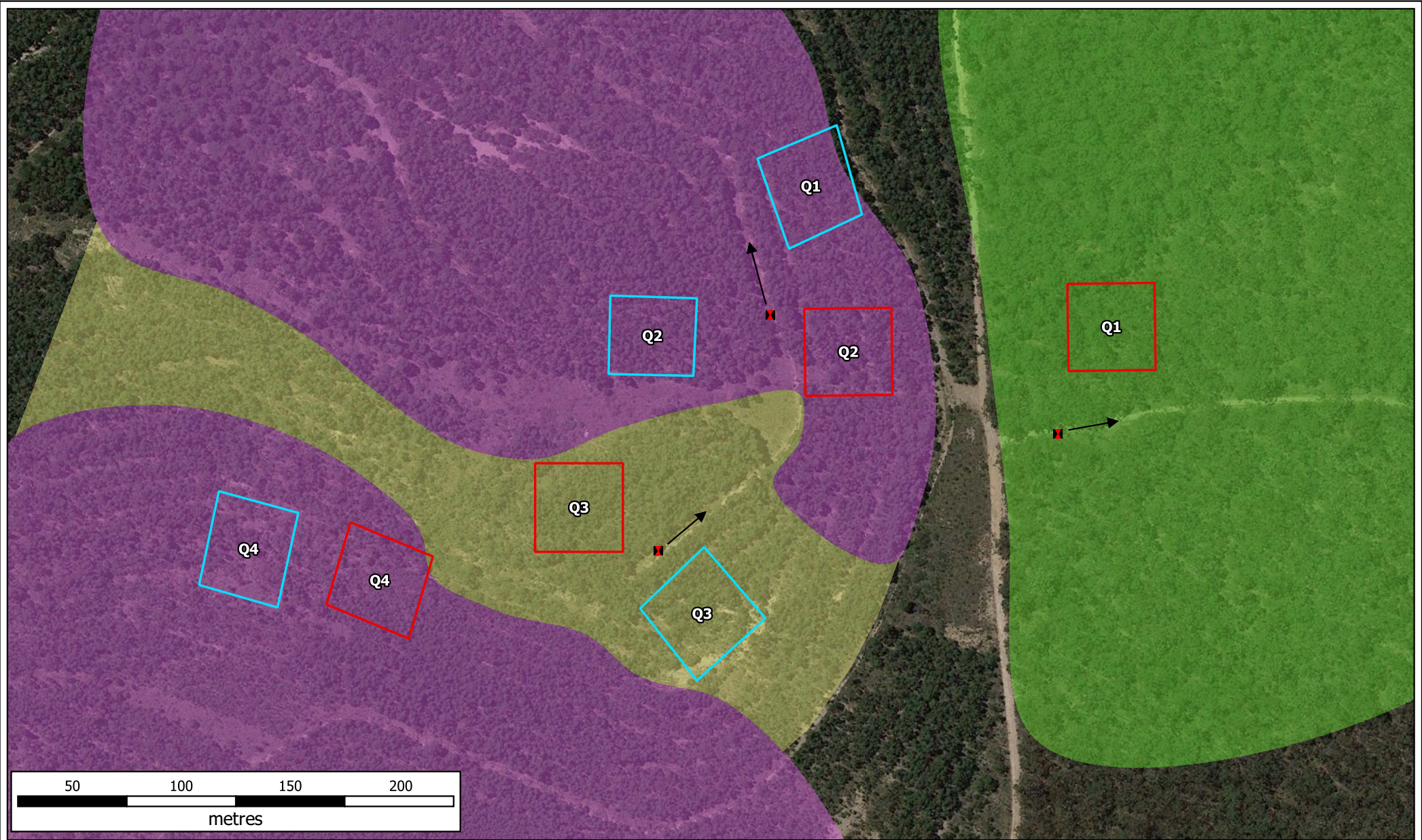
The assessment of fauna (including herpetofauna, Microchiropteran bats and Mammalia species) was undertaken across the four, 40 x 40 m (1600 m<sup>2</sup>) quadrats Q1 – Q4 between 20 and 28 November 2023. The quadrats were positioned within vegetation communities at different stages of rehabilitation (**Figure 2**):

- Quadrat 1 Q1 is located in mature Spotted Gum – Ironbark open forest.
- Quadrat Q2 is situated approximately 80 m west of the first quadrat in a rehabilitated area containing 18-year-old vegetation.
- Quadrat Q3 is within 16-year-old rehabilitation and is located approximately 90 m to the southwest of quadrat Q2.
- Quadrat Q4 is located 45 m to the southwest of quadrat Q3 also in a rehabilitated area containing 18-year-old vegetation.

**Table 1** depicts the total trap night count, and the location of trapping activities are shown in **Figure 3**.

**Table 1: Trapping statistics for the four quadrats combined.**

Trap type	Traps	Nights	Trap nights
Elliott A	80	8	640
Type IV Funnel	24	8	192
Cage	8	8	64
Camera	4	4	16



Created by: KBlundell  
Date: 09.03.2023



**Legend**

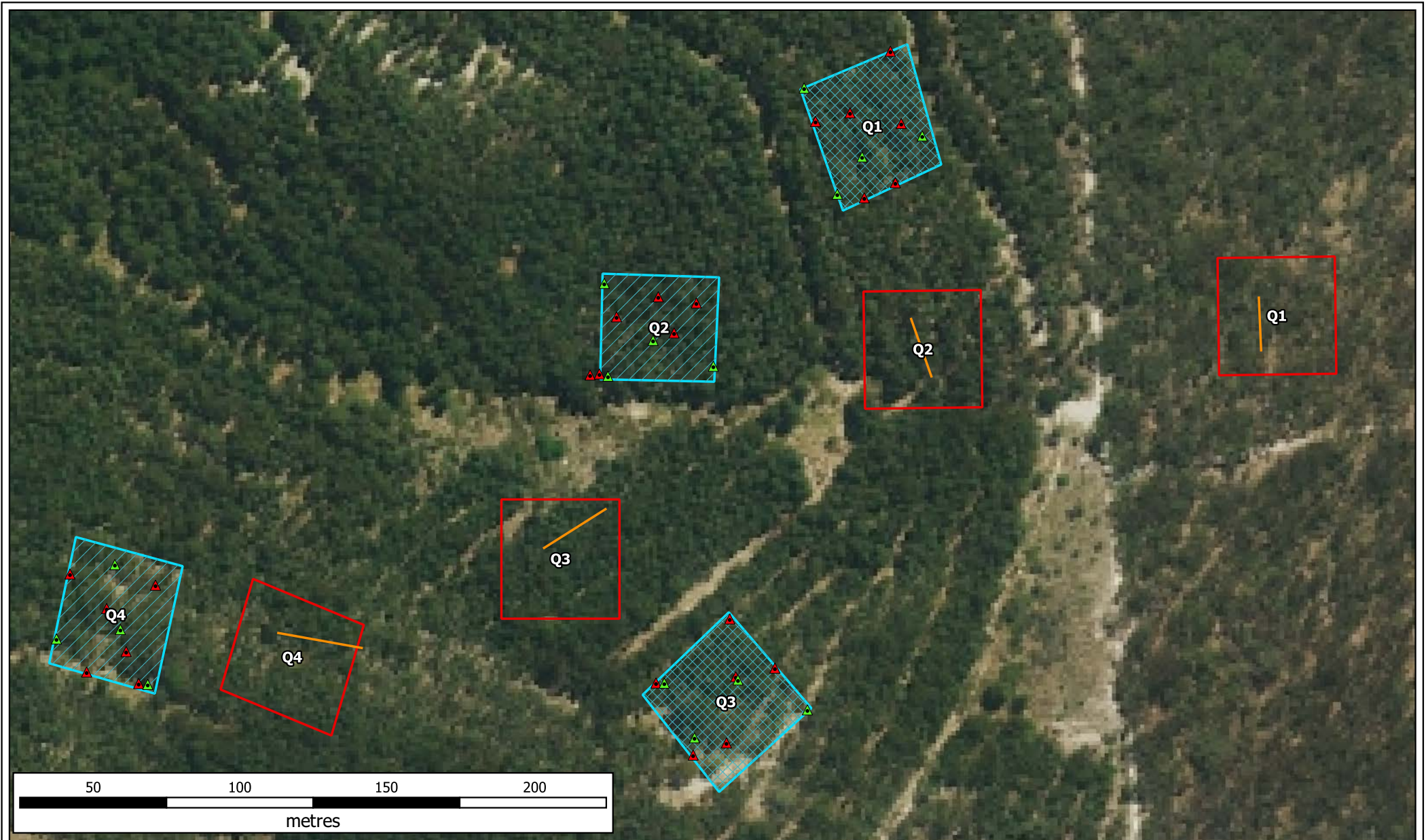
- Study Area Quadrats
- Nestbox Quadrats
- Anabat Locations (and Directions)
- 2003 Rehab
- 2005 Rehab
- Spotted Gum - Ironbark Open Forest

**Survey Quadrats & Corresponding Age of Rehabilitation**

Donaldson Coal  
John Renshaw Drive  
Black Hill NSW

Figure: **2**





Created by: KBlundell  
Date: 09.03.2023



**Legend**

- Study Area Quadrats
- ReptileRuns

**Nestbox Quadrats**

- high fallen timber
- low fallen timber

**Nestbox Location**

- ▲ Arboreal box
- ▲ terrestrial box

**Nest Box and Fauna Quadrat Trapping Locations - Donaldson Coal Open Cut Mine**

Figure: **3**

Donaldson Coal  
John Renshaw Drive  
Black Hill NSW





## 2.2.1 Terrestrial Mammals

Terrestrial mammals were surveyed between 20-28 November 2023. Eighty Elliott A traps (20 per quadrat) were placed in an irregular grid pattern (4 x 5 traps). The 'best lie' method was used to avoid placing traps in open or exposed positions. Small mammals tend to avoid open spaces, preferring to go around the edge of a clearing rather than across it. Traps are generally more successful when placed against logs, under thick vegetation or along natural pathways through vegetation. Traps were baited with a mix of rolled oats, honey, peanut butter, and treacle and set in position for eight consecutive nights and were checked each morning.

A Long-nosed Bandicoot (*Perameles nasuta*) was seen at quadrat Q3 during trap layout in December 2009. As a result, two cage traps were added to the trapping methodology for each quadrat to target larger terrestrial mammals. These traps were baited with the same mixture and set in position for eight consecutive nights and checked each morning. Additionally, remote camera sampling was utilised in 2022 for the first time in the monitoring program. This involved the installation of a single remote camera at a set location within each quadrat.

## 2.2.2 Bats

Insectivorous Microchiropteran bat species were surveyed using Anabat recording units (Titley Scientific, Lawnton QLD). This method was introduced in 2011 and is now replicated annually. An Anabat was placed in the remnant vegetation quadrat Q1, 18-year-old rehab quadrat Q2, 16-year-old rehab (near quadrat Q3) and within quadrat Q4 for the first time in 2021. The units were set out at 8 pm and recording continued through the night until 6 am for a total of 30 recording hours.

## 2.2.3 Birds

An area search within each quadrat was carried out on 21 November 2023 to survey for diurnal birds for a 20-minute period. Birds were identified either visually, with the aid of binoculars, or by call interpretation. Surveys were conducted in the morning when bird activity is at its peak (Bibby et al. 2000). Opportunistic sightings were also recorded and listed separately to actual survey results.

## 2.2.4 Herpetofauna

Six funnel traps were set along a 26 m run of drift fence in each quadrat between 20 – 28 November 2023. Trapping lines were left for eight consecutive nights and traps were checked daily.

Diurnal habitat searches for amphibians and reptiles were carried out within each quadrat during the November trapping period. Adult frogs encountered were identified by visual confirmation or their distinct advertisement calls. Suitable reptile habitat was inspected to detect any reptile species directly or indirectly through scats or other detectable traces. Suitable habitat included rock outcrops and crevices, fallen hollow logs and limbs, and burrows.

## 2.3 NEST BOXES

In 2011 an additional project was initiated within the rehabilitation areas involving the use of nest boxes as a method of promoting re-colonisation by arboreal and terrestrial species. Four quadrats located in similar rehabilitation age groups as the monitoring quadrats were selected and 10 nest boxes were erected (six terrestrial, four arboreal). The annual inspection was undertaken on 24 November 2023. The locations of the nest box plots and the existing fauna monitoring plots are provided in **Figure 3**. Photographs of the nest boxes design and current condition are provided in

**Appendix B.** All nest boxes were replaced on the 4 April 2022 with the older nest boxes being of poor condition and not being utilised by fauna species.

## 2.4 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Data on fauna species detected between 2008 and 2023 were analysed to determine whether species richness or diversity differed between rehabilitation ages. Fourteen of the 16 sample periods were in summer and one in autumn (Baseline study in March 2008). The season in which surveys were conducted is known to have a significant influence on fauna diversity and abundance so data from March 2008 were excluded from analysis.

The relationship between two variables, species richness and sample year, was explored by linear regression. Regression statistics and charts were produced using Microsoft Excel. Non-metric Multidimensional Scaling (nMDS) and cluster analysis were also undertaken to explore the relationship between the fauna species assemblages detected in different rehabilitation age classes.

The Primer-E software program was used with the Kulczynski Similarity Index for presence only data (Clarke and Gorley 2006). This analysis produced scatterplots which graphically depicted, in 2-dimensional space, the similarity between species assemblages of different survey years. Associated dendrograms were also produced that graphically depict the relationship between sample years. The strength of any clusters apparent in the scatterplot was tested by running a similarity profile routine (SIMPROF) over branches in the dendrogram. Solid lines in the dendrogram indicate statistically significant clusters whereas dotted lines indicate clusters that are not statistically significant.

## 3. RESULTS

### 3.1 WEATHER CONDITIONS

The prevailing weather conditions throughout the trapping survey period (20 to 28 November 2023) were warm days to mild nights. The total rainfall for the survey period was 14.8 mm, which predominantly fell on the 21, 25 and 28 of November. During the trapping survey period the mean minimum temperature was 14.5°C and the maximum temperature was 27.8°C for the month of November.

### 3.2 VEGETATION STRUCTURE

Flora monitoring does not form part of the program, however due to its relevance to fauna richness and re-colonisation, observations (refer Plates 1 to 8) regarding changes in floral diversity and structure are provided. Descriptions of all four quadrats are as follows:

- Q1 – located in an area of remnant vegetation and consists of mature Ironbark and Spotted Gum. Woody debris levels are low (7.26 tonne/ha) (**Plate 1**) and (**Plate 2**).
- Q2 – located in the rehabilitation areas planted in 2003 which are dominated by a canopy of Eucalypt and Acacia species. Little ground cover is present and woody debris is high (57.36 tonne/ha) (**Plate 3** and **Plate 4**).
- Q3 – located in the rehabilitation areas planted in 2005 which are dominated by a canopy of Eucalypt and Acacia species medium shrub growth. No wood was placed in Q3 hence the low woody debris score (3.33 tonne/ha) (**Plate 5**) and (**Plate 6**).
- Q4 – located in the rehabilitation areas planted in 2003. This area is dominated by a canopy of Eucalypt and Acacia species. This area has dense shrub growth and high woody debris levels (33.94 tonne/ha) (**Plate 7** and **Plate 8**).

As expected, the overstorey vegetation of the rehabilitation quadrats is noticeably taller (~10-15 m) than in March 2008 (average 3 m). The Eucalypt species have continued to grow, but many of the *Acacia* species that were present in previous surveys have reached the end of their life cycle and are dead or dying. Observations of floral diversity and structure were made in 2023 for each of the quadrats and are provided below.

Quadrat Q1 remnant vegetation has an open canopy dominated by *Corymbia maculata* and *Eucalyptus fibrosa*. Midstorey consists of younger eucalypts plus *Allocasuarina torulosa*, *Perseosia linearis*, and *Leptospermum polygalifolium*. Not many true shrubs were present, with the exception of *Daviesia ulicifolia* and *Bursaria spinosa*. Ground cover is 95% grass cover dominated with litter. *Entolasia stricta* is the dominant grass species, with *Aristida vagans*, *Echinopogon ovatus*, *Lomandra longifolia*, *L. multiflora*, and *Lepyrodia scariosa* also present. Photos were taken from the southwest corner looking North (**Plate 1** and **Plate 2**).

Quadrat Q2 located within rehabilitated vegetation planted 2003 is a relatively open woodland with canopy dominated almost entirely by *C. maculata*. The midstory is dominated by younger eucalypts which indicates at least a second seeding event. Other species include *L. polygalifolium*, *Acacia irrorata*, *A. longifolia* and *P. linearis*. Shrubs observed include *Leucopogon juniperinus*, whilst dieback of *Acacias* continues to be observed. Ground cover consists of grass and 60% litter. Ten percent of ground cover was dominated by *E. stricta*, with *Rytidosperma fulvum*, *Lomandra longifolia*,

and *Lepyrodia scariosa* also present. Photos were taken from the south west corner looking north (**Plate 3** and **Plate 4**).

Quadrat Q3 is located within rehabilitated vegetation planted in 2005 also had canopy dominated by *C. maculata*, but some *E. tereticornis* present. The canopy was dense, with at least 2 and maybe 3 class sizes evident. The midstory consisted of younger eucalypts and *Allocasuarina torulosa*. No true shrub species were observed to be present, however small eucalypts (<1.5m) were observed. The groundcover is litter dominated (80% litter). Grasses and forbs present include *E. stricta*, *L. scariosa*, *Glycine clandestina*, and *Eragrostis brownii*. Photos were taken from the southwest corner looking North (**Plate 5** and **Plate 6**).

Quadrat Q4, also located within rehabilitated vegetation planted in 2003, had canopy dominated by *C. maculata* of at least three age ranges, with some *E. tereticornis* observed and lots of woody debris present. The midstory consists of younger eucalypts, as well as *Allocasuarina torulosa* and *L. polygalifolium*. One true shrub species, *Styphelia trifloral*, was observed to be present. Groundcover was observed to be 50% grass and 50% litter. *E. stricta* was the dominant grass species, with *Gahnia* spp., *Lepyrodia scariosa* and *Lomandra longifolia* also present. No lantana was evident within the quadrat itself, but *Andropogon virginicus* observed.

Observations show that ground dwelling forb species have continued to emerge, and native grasses are plentiful in some areas. Additional ground layer structure (leaf litter and woody debris) is also continuing to develop due to natural processes. Although overall floristic diversity is still relatively low, as the vegetation continues to age, it is likely that thinning of the canopy will facilitate greater species diversity within the understorey, including increased diversity of shrubs. This may take many years to occur. Unfortunately, there has been an increase of weed density within Q2 and surrounding areas with Lantana (*Lantana camara*) continuing to spread.



**Plate 1: Q1 – Understorey**



**Plate 2: Q1 Mid storey and Canopy**



**Plate 3: Q2 – Understorey**



**Plate 4: Q2 – Mid storey and Canopy.**



**Plate 5: Q3 – Understorey**



**Plate 6: Q3 – Mid storey and Canopy.**



**Plate 7: Q4 – Understorey**



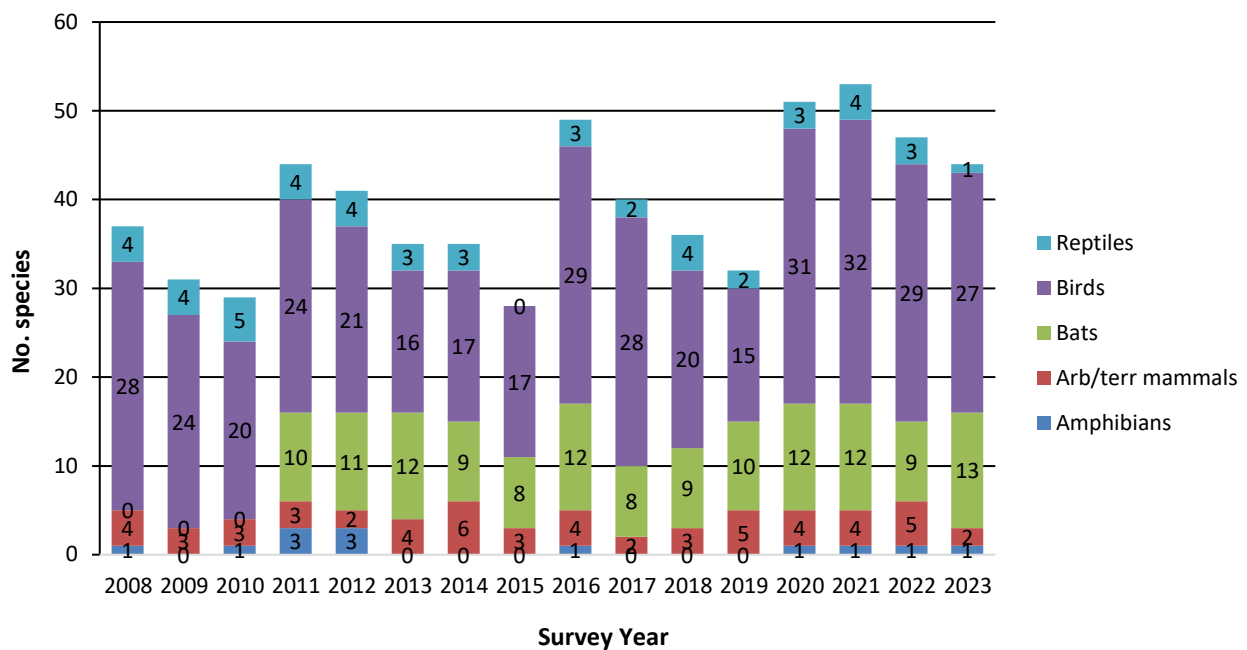
**Plate 8: Q4 – Mid storey and Canopy.**



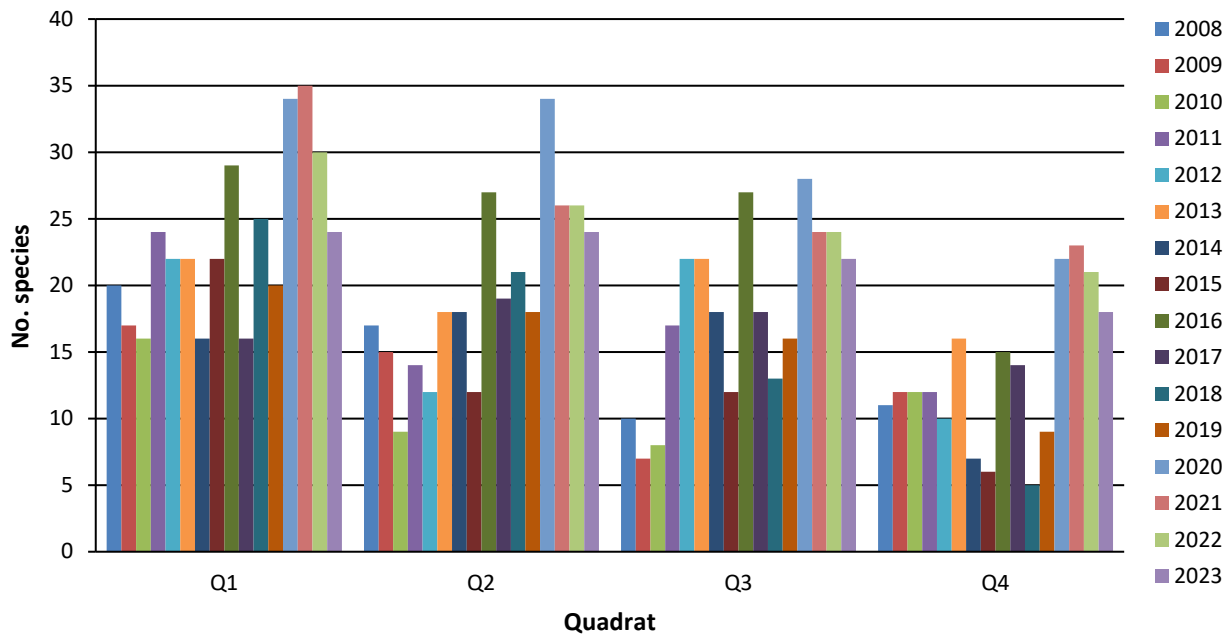
### 3.3 FAUNA

Forty-four fauna species were recorded during the 2023 survey (above the yearly average 39.3) (**Figure 4**). Photographs of native fauna species trapped and observed during the current survey are provided in **Appendix C**. A large increase in the number of species detected across all quadrats between years prior to, and years post 2011 is attributed to the inclusion of Anabat detection of Microchiropteran bat species in Q1, Q2, Q3 (2011 onwards) and Q4 (2021) (Figure 5).

The current survey results were comprised of one arboreal and one terrestrial mammal respectively, 13 Microchiropteran bats, 27 bird species, one reptile and one amphibian species.



**Figure 4: Number of fauna species per year from 2008 – 2023 (all quadrats combined).**

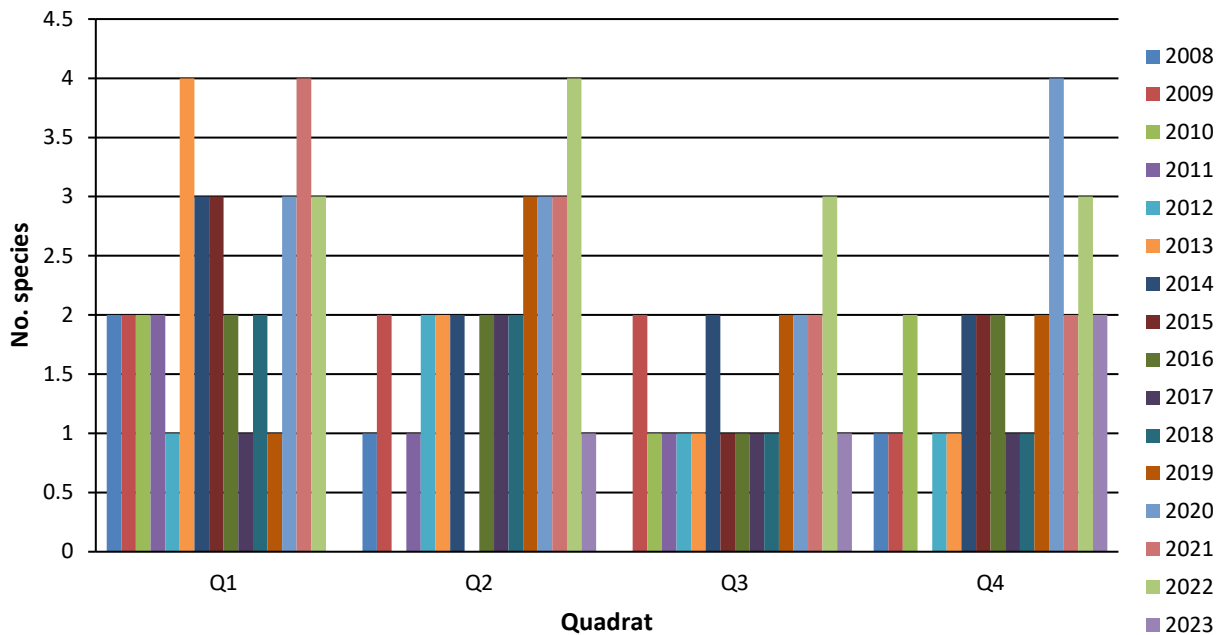


**Figure 5: Number of fauna species per quadrat from 2008 – 2023.**

### 3.3.1 Arboreal and Terrestrial Mammals

One arboreal and one terrestrial mammal species were recorded during the survey (**Figure 6**). The Common Brushtail Possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*) was detected in quadrats Q2 and Q4, whilst the Brown Antechinus (*Antechinus stuartii*) was detected in quadrats Q3 and Q4.

The level of recorded mammalian species richness has been most variable in quadrat Q1, ranging between one to four species. One mammal species was detected in quadrat Q2 in November 2023, yet the overall trend from previous years shows a gradual increase in species. Mammalian species richness in Q3 was observed to be lower in 2023, with year-to-year average showing 1-2 species detected. Q4 displayed a slightly higher range of species richness to quadrat Q3, ranging between two to three species year to year, with four species recorded in 2020. The level of species richness recorded in this quadrat in 2023 remains similar to previous years (two species).

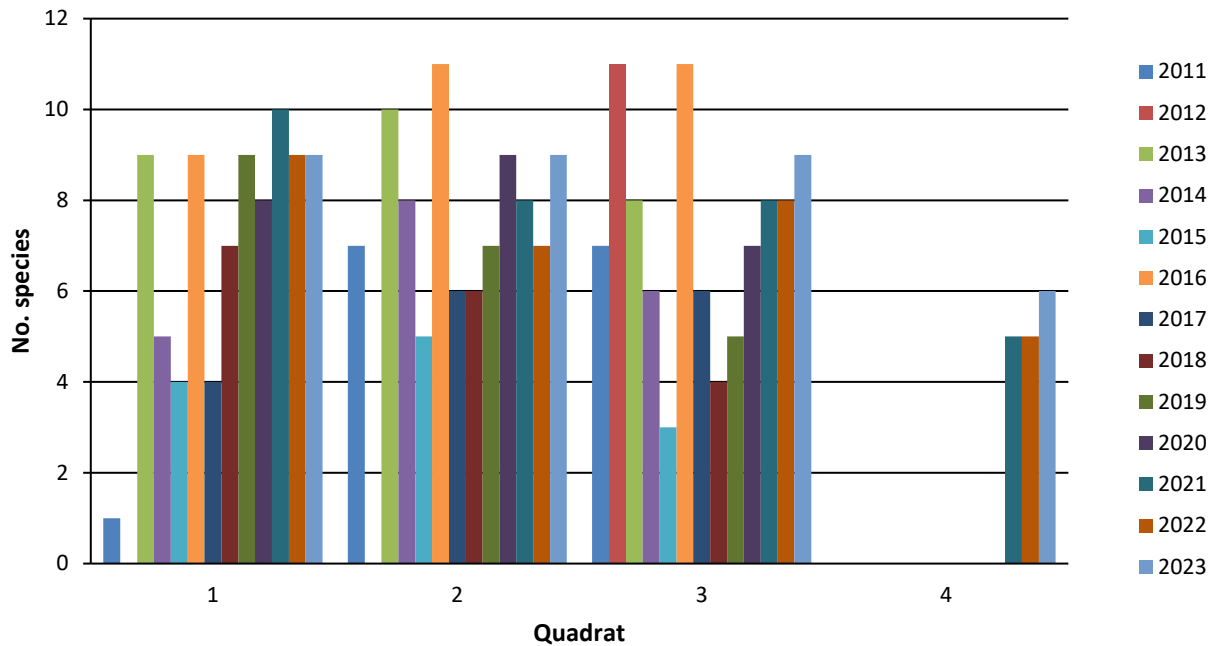


**Figure 6: Number of arboreal and terrestrial mammal species per quadrat from 2008 – 2023.**

The Brown Antechinus was not observed quadrat Q3 or quadrat Q4 during the early years of the monitoring program, however evidence of use by this species was recorded in 2013 in a nearby nest box plot. Usage of the rehabilitation area by the Brown Antechinus was confirmed in 2014 with the capture of a male animal in an Elliott A trap in quadrat Q4 over two consecutive mornings. The species has since been captured in quadrat Q4 from 2015 – 2023, excluding 2018. The first capture of a Brown Antechinus from quadrat Q3 was in 2017. Subsequent captures have now been recorded each year from 2020-2023, indicating that all ages of rehabilitation are now providing suitable habitat for this species.

### 3.3.2 Bats

A total of 13 bat species were recorded across the mature forest and rehabilitation areas in the November 2023 survey, four of which, Little Bent-winged Bat (*Miniopterus australis*), Eastern Cave Bat (*Vespadelus troughtoni*), Greater broad-nosed Bat (*Scoteanax rueppellii*), and the Eastern Coastal Free-tailed Bat (*Micronomus norfolkensis*) are listed as Vulnerable species under the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (BC Act). Previously, only quadrats Q1, Q2 and Q3 had been surveyed for bats according to survey methodologies introduced in 2011. The same methodology was introduced in quadrat Q4 during the 2021 monitoring period, allowing for six bat species to be recorded including the Vulnerable Little Bent-winged Bat in 2023. The number of bat species recorded per quadrat during current survey remains above average for quadrats Q1-3, whilst slightly below average for quadrat Q4 (Figure 7).



**Figure 7: Number of bat species per quadrat from 2011-2023.**

### 3.3.3 Birds

Twenty-seven bird species were recorded across all quadrats during the current survey (**Figure 8**). The result is well above the average of 23.6 species recorded across all quadrats between 2008 and 2023. In 2023, the number of bird species detected was above the yearly average for quadrats Q2-4, and slightly lower than average for quadrat Q1. Overall bird species detected was slightly less than the previous year’s monitoring event 29 species (2022). The number of bird species recorded per quadrat each year is highly variable, with some survey years (2011, 2012, 2015 and 2018) recording considerably higher diversity in the mature forest (quadrat Q1) in comparison with the rehabilitation quadrats. In 2023, there was a slightly higher diversity of birds detected within the remnant vegetation (quadrat Q1) than in the rehabilitated vegetation (quadrats Q2, Q3, and Q4).

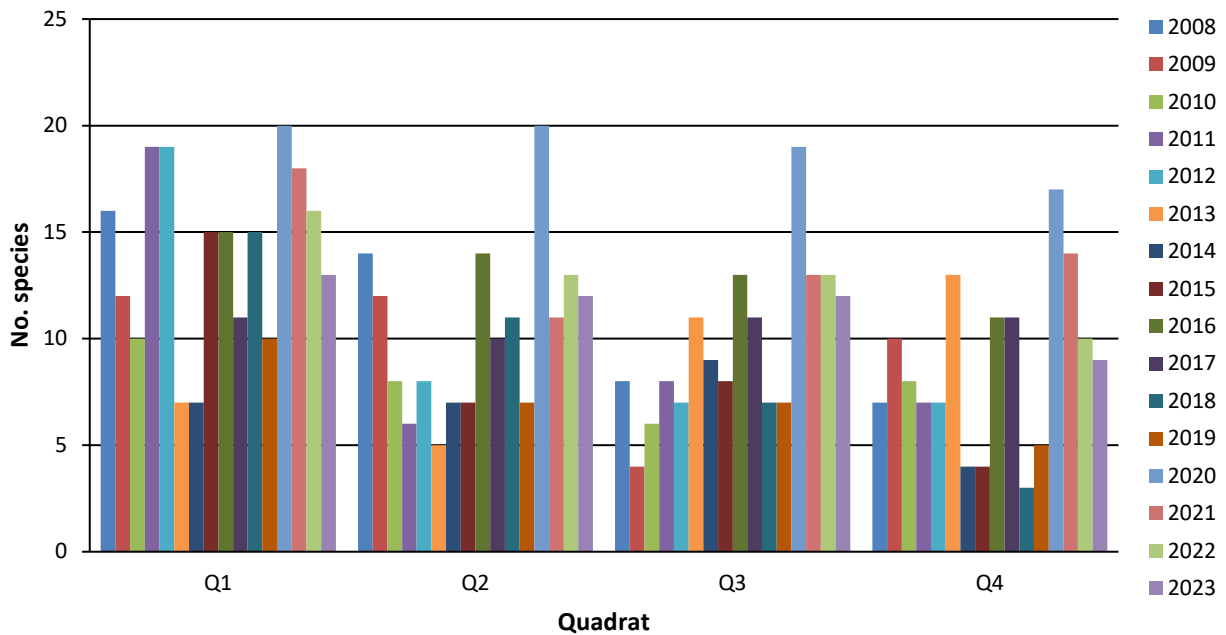


Figure 8: Number of bird species per quadrat from 2008-2023.

### 3.3.4 Reptiles

One reptile species was detected during the current survey (Figure 9). Garden Skink (*Lampropholis delicata*) has been recorded sporadically throughout the monitoring program and was once again detected in all quadrats except quadrat Q3.

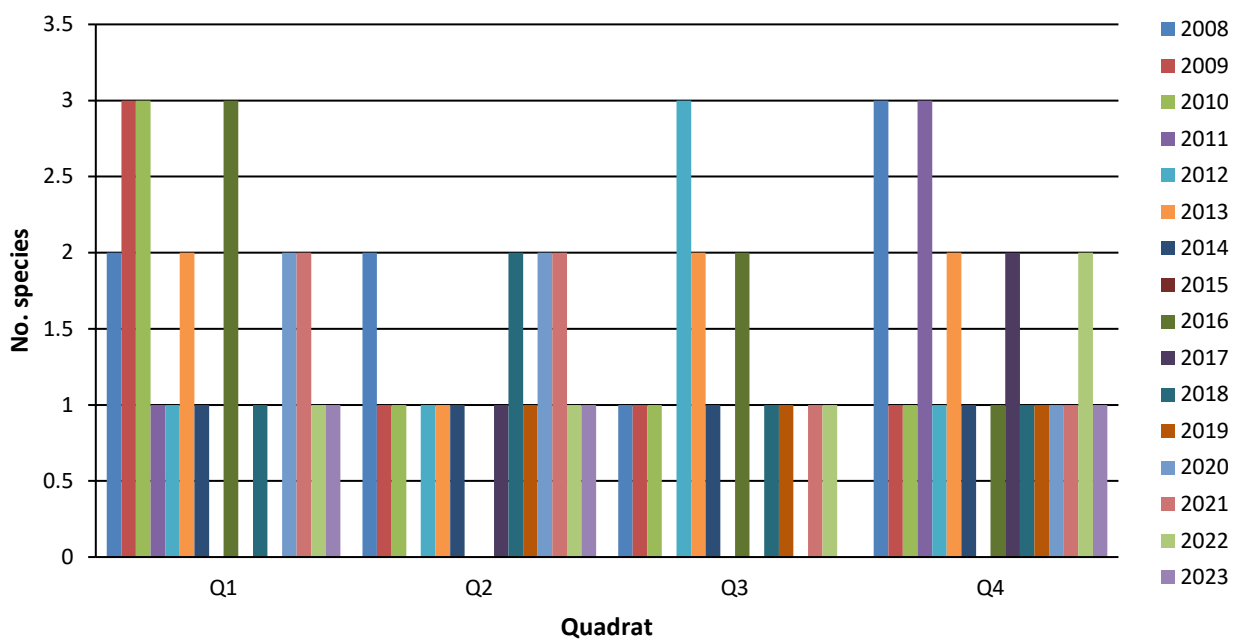
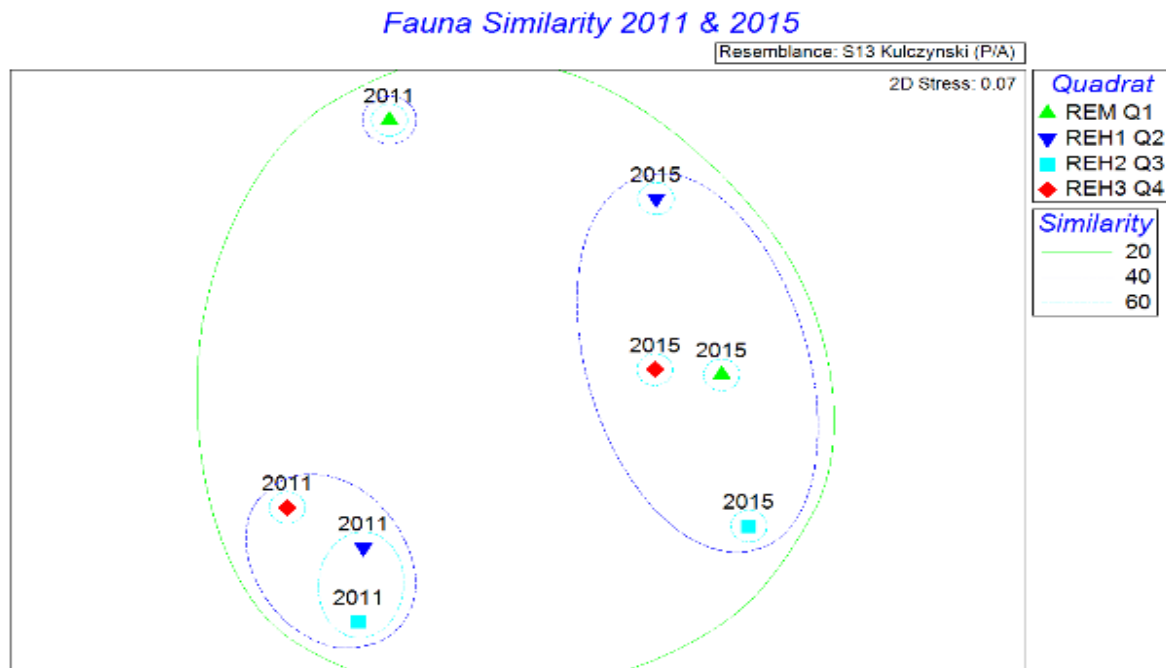


Figure 9: Number of reptile species per quadrat from 2008-2023.

### 3.4 FAUNA DIVERSITY PER QUADRAT

Three age classes of vegetation occur across the study area including remnant forest (**Plate 1-2**), rehabilitation planted in 2003 (**Plate 3-4** and **7-8**), and rehabilitation planted in 2005 (**Plate 5-6**). The location of all quadrats and corresponding rehabilitation age are shown in **Figure 2**. Non-metric Multidimensional Scaling (nMDS) analysis was used to investigate the relationship between the remnant vegetation and the rehabilitation vegetation based on the degree of similarity between fauna assemblages. The closer the data points are to each other, the more similar the fauna assemblages. Remnant refers to quadrat Q1, Rehab 1, 2 and 3 refer to quadrats Q2, Q3 and Q4, respectively.

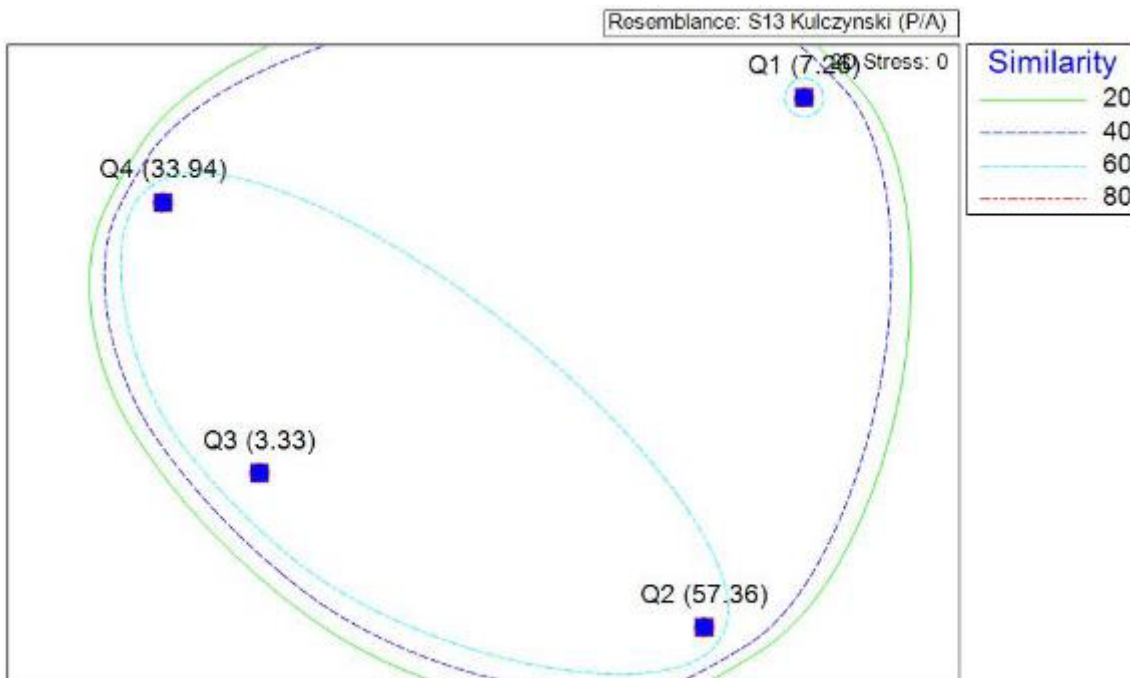
The nMDS analysis showed that in 2011, after four years of monitoring, all three rehabilitated quadrats Q2, Q3, Q4 were at least 40% similar to each other with Rehab 1 and 2 being the most similar (greater than 60%) similar. The three rehabilitated areas, however, were marginally similar to the remnant forest in 2011, at only 20% similarity (**Figure 10**). After another four years, in 2015, all quadrats, including the remnant forest and rehabilitated areas, were greater than 40% similar. These findings show that over time the fauna assemblage in the rehabilitation areas is resembling the fauna species diversity of the remnant forest.



**Figure 10: Non-metric Multidimensional Scaling analysis of all fauna per quad after 4 years (2011) and 8 years (2015). REM (Q1) = remnant vegetation; REH1 (Q2) = rehab planted in 2003; REH2 (Q3) = rehab planted in 2005; REH3 (Q4) = rehab planted 2003.**

Similarity measure analysis was also performed, comparing the fauna diversity of remnant and rehabilitated areas between 2016 – 2023 (**Figure 11**). In 2018, quadrats Q2 and Q3 were found to have a similarity index of 60%, with Q1 reducing in similarity to 40% in comparison to these other quadrats. In 2019, quadrats Q1 and Q2 had a similarity index of 60% increasing the index of quadrat Q1 from 40% in 2018. Both quadrats Q3 and Q4 having a 40% similarity in 2019 which is the first-time quadrat Q4 has had a 40% similarity to quadrat Q1 since 2015 being 20% in the previous years. In 2020, quadrats Q1, Q2 and Q3 all have a similarity of between 60-80% with quadrat Q4 being high in the range of between 40-60%. Within the 2021 monitoring period, quadrats Q1 and Q2 had a similarity 60% whilst quadrats Q3 and Q4 had a lower similarity, between 40-60%. In 2022 quadrats Q1 and Q2 have a similarity of 60% with each other and quadrats Q3 and Q4 having a 40% similarity with the other two quadrats. **Figure 11** illustrates that in 2023, rehabilitation quadrats Q2, Q3 and Q4 were 60% similar to each other, whilst collectively share only 40% similarity to the remnant quadrat Q1. As habitat complexity and vegetation structure increases in rehab quadrats Q2-4, it is expected similarity with remnant quadrat Q1 will continue to increase, thus developing habitat values parallel to the remnant.

In the earlier years quadrat Q4 was found to have a similarity index of only 20% when compared with all other quadrats until 2019-2020, where the similarity index increased to between 40% and 60%. It was expected that the fauna diversity at quadrat Q4 would continue to have less similarity to all other quadrats as the survey design did not incorporate Anabat (microbat detector) deployment. Microbat species often contribute to approximately 30-40% of species richness over the last six years at quadrats Q1, Q2 and Q3 where microbats are specifically surveyed (using Anabat detectors). The inclusion of bat surveying methodology may explain why the assemblage of quadrat Q4 experienced the highest similarity rate to the species assemblage of the other rehabilitation quadrats Q2 and Q3 since its introduction in 2021.



**Figure 11: Non-metric Multidimensional Scaling analysis of all fauna per quad between years 2016-2023. REM (Q1) = remnant vegetation; REH1 (Q2) = rehab planted in 2003; REH2 (Q3) = rehab planted in 2005; REH3 (Q4) = rehab planted 2003.**

### 3.5 FAUNA DIVERSITY VS WOODY DEBRIS

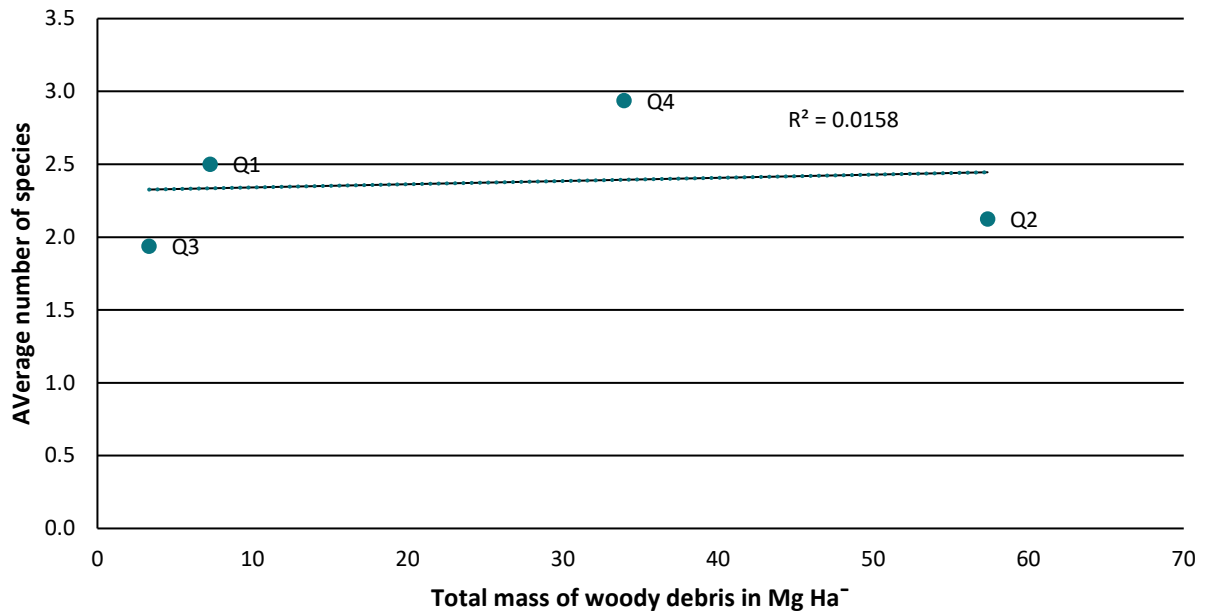
The results of the woody debris survey of each quadrat are presented in **Table 2** as background information. These data were collected in the preliminary survey quadrats Q1, Q2 and Q4 and the first quadrat Q3 monitoring event.

**Table 2: Characteristics of woody debris between and within each quadrat.**

Quadrat No.	No. of pieces of woody debris per quadrat $\geq 8$ cm diameter	Average diameter of woody debris (cm)	Average length of woody debris (cm)	Total mass of woody debris in Tonne/Ha <sup>-1</sup>
1 – mature forest stand	23	14.00	390.52	7.26
2 – now 20-year-old rehab	39	14.79	128.74	57.36
3 – now 18-year-old rehab	50	15.45	71.70	3.33
4 – now 20-year-old rehab	91	13.75	103.92	33.94

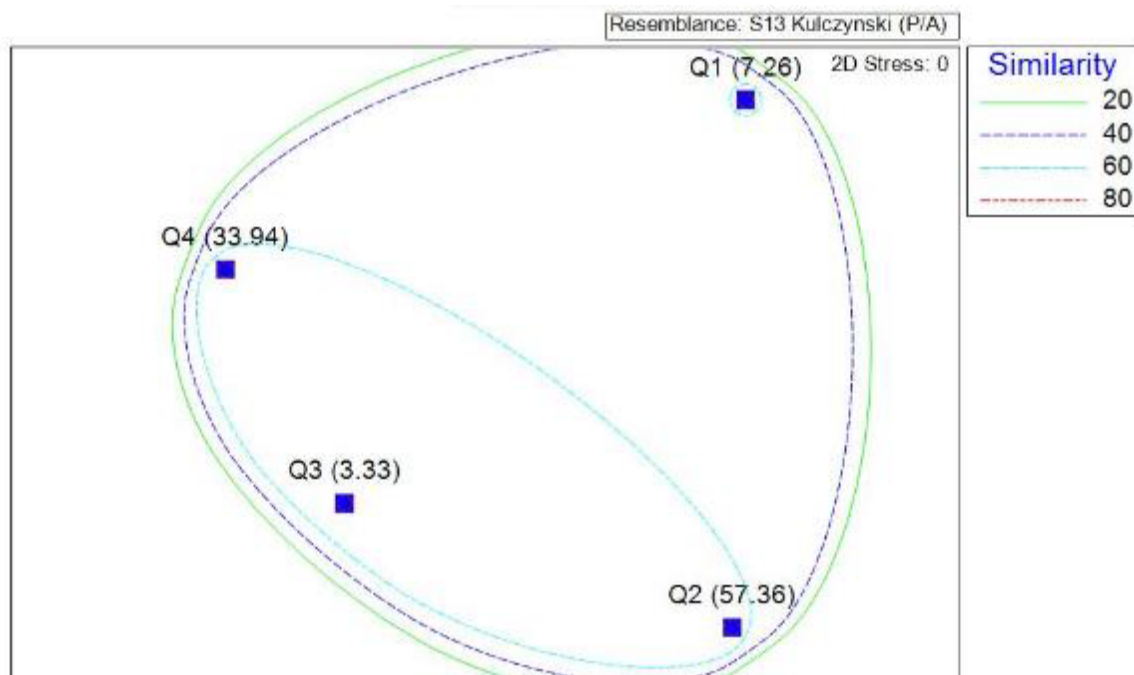
**Figure 12** demonstrates the relationship between the average number of terrestrial species recorded in each quadrat since monitoring began and the total mass of woody debris in each quadrat. The low  $R^2$  (0.0158) value shows no effect regarding the quantity of woody debris in each quadrat and the number of terrestrial species recorded.





**Figure 12: Average number of terrestrial species recorded each year, per quadrat and total mass of woody debris (T/Ha).**

Non-metric Multidimensional Scaling (nMDS) was used to determine whether the quantity of woody debris influenced terrestrial fauna assemblage. **Figure 13** shows that all quadrats have a similarity index of at least 40-60%. A single cluster of quadrats Q2, Q3 and Q4 had a greater similarity (60-80%) than quadrat Q1 (remnant). However, these clusters are not related to the quantity of woody debris as the most similar quadrats, in terms of terrestrial fauna diversity, have significantly different quantities of woody debris.



**Figure 13: Non-metric Multidimensional Scaling analysis of number of terrestrial fauna species detected from 2008-2023 and its relationship to the quantity of woody debris at each quadrat. Please note that the similarity between this and figure and Figure 11 is coincidental and not a mistake.**

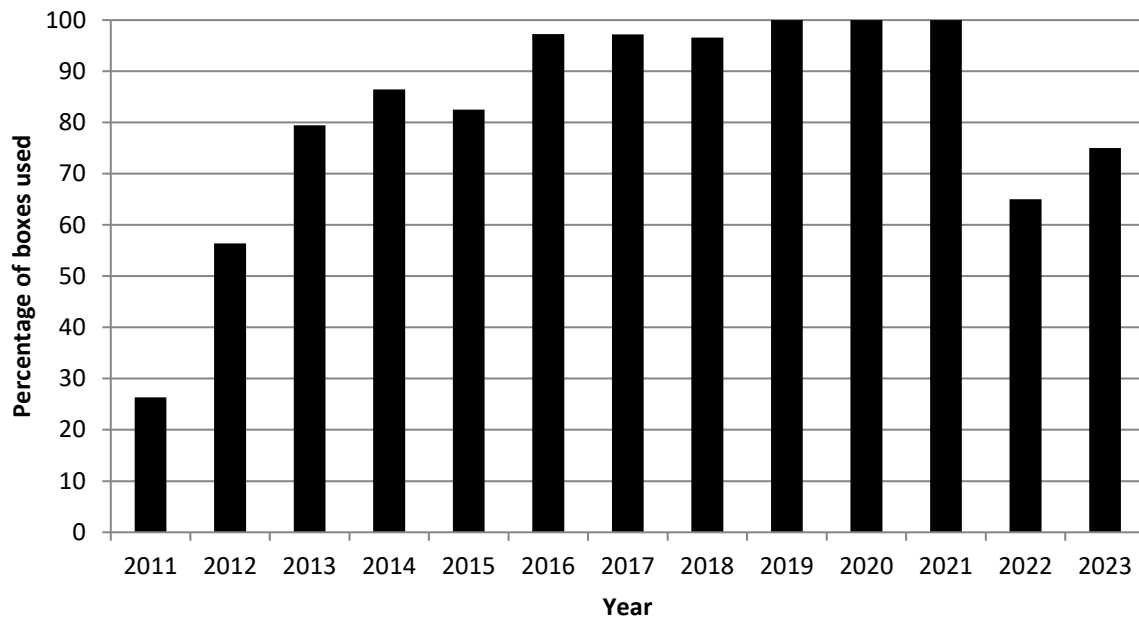
### 3.6 NEST BOXES

Since monitoring began, all quadrats have shown evidence of activity in the form of individuals present, fresh leaf nests, scats, scratches, and hairs. The most prevalent species has been the Sugar Glider. **Appendix B** contains photographs of the nest boxes and contents.

Nest box usage is recorded in four ways:

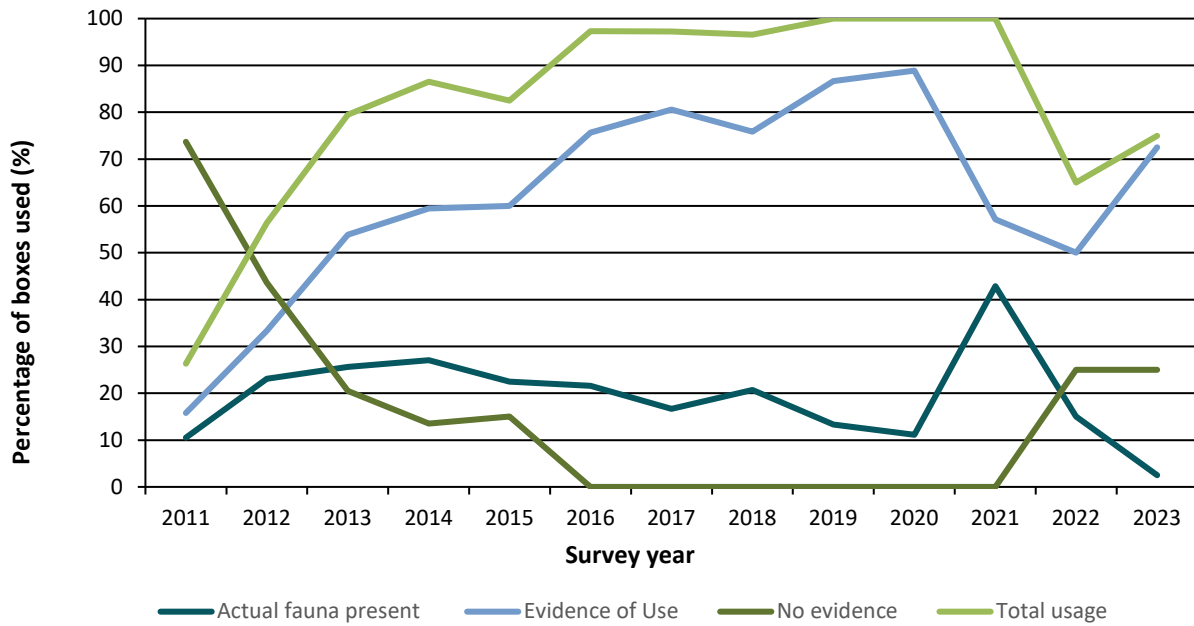
- 1. Actual use, animals sighted in the nest box (A).
- 2. Evidence of use which includes nests, scats, and hair (E).
- 3. Unavailable (U) – the box is not habitable due to occupation by insects or from damage such as a missing lid or the box having fallen to the ground, and
- 4. No evidence (N).

In 2023, the total usage rate (A+E) for all usable nest boxes was 75% (30 out of 40 available boxes), a slight increase from 2022 (**Figure 14**). The total actual usage rate (A), where fauna was present within nest boxes, in 2023 was 2.5% (1 of 40 boxes). This represents a reduction in total actual usage to all previous years.



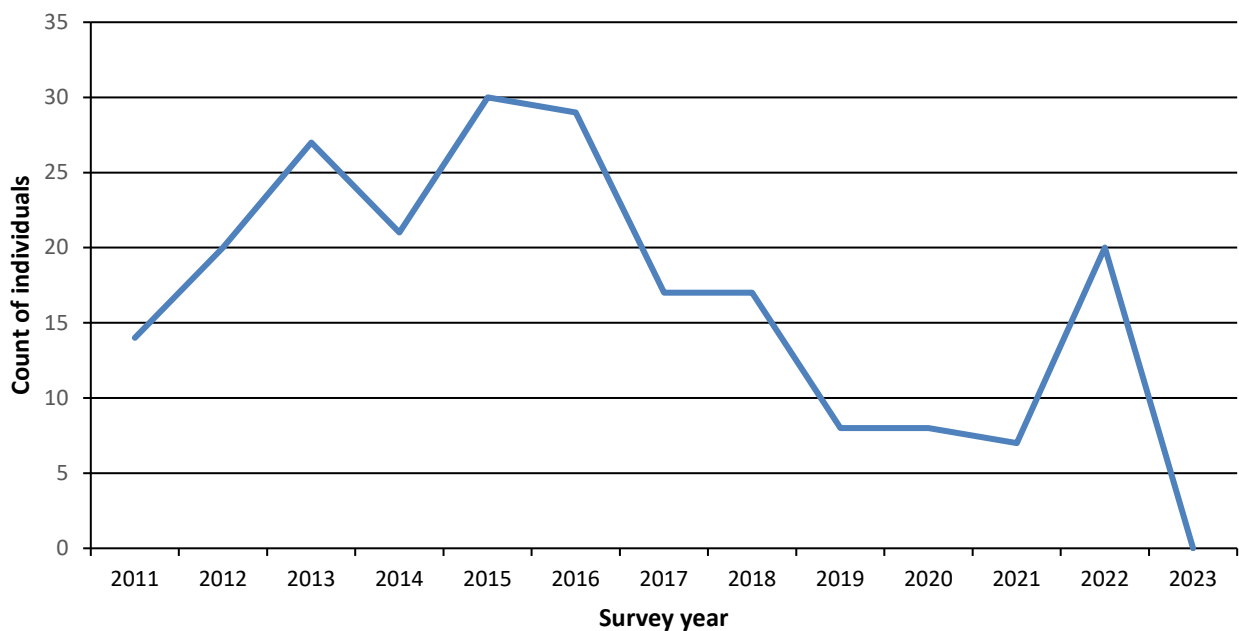
**Figure 14: The percentage of total nest box usage (A+ E, useable nestboxes only) for all quadrats 2011 – 2023.**

The percentage of boxes containing resident fauna (A) has remained steady over much of the monitoring period until 2019 and 2020 where there was an approximate 50% decrease over two years (**Figure 15**). In 2023, there has been a continued decrease in the percentage of boxes with actual fauna present (A). Evidence of use (E) by fauna has increased every year until 2017, with a small decrease in 2018, followed by an increase in 2019 and 2020. In 2023, evidence of use continued to increase substantially. This is reflected in an overall increase in total usage. The number of available boxes showing no signs of fauna use remains steady, due to more boxes having been made available with new boxes installed in April 2022.



**Figure 15: Percentage of available nest boxes used per usage category 2011 – 2023.**

An analysis of Sugar Glider counts over time (2011 – 2023) (**Figure 16**) identified a steady increase from 2011 to 2015. The population has since declined; although there was a sharp increase in 2022 attributed to installation of new nest boxes increasing the likelihood of observation, 2023 has seen the overall trend of decrease (2017 – 2023) continue.

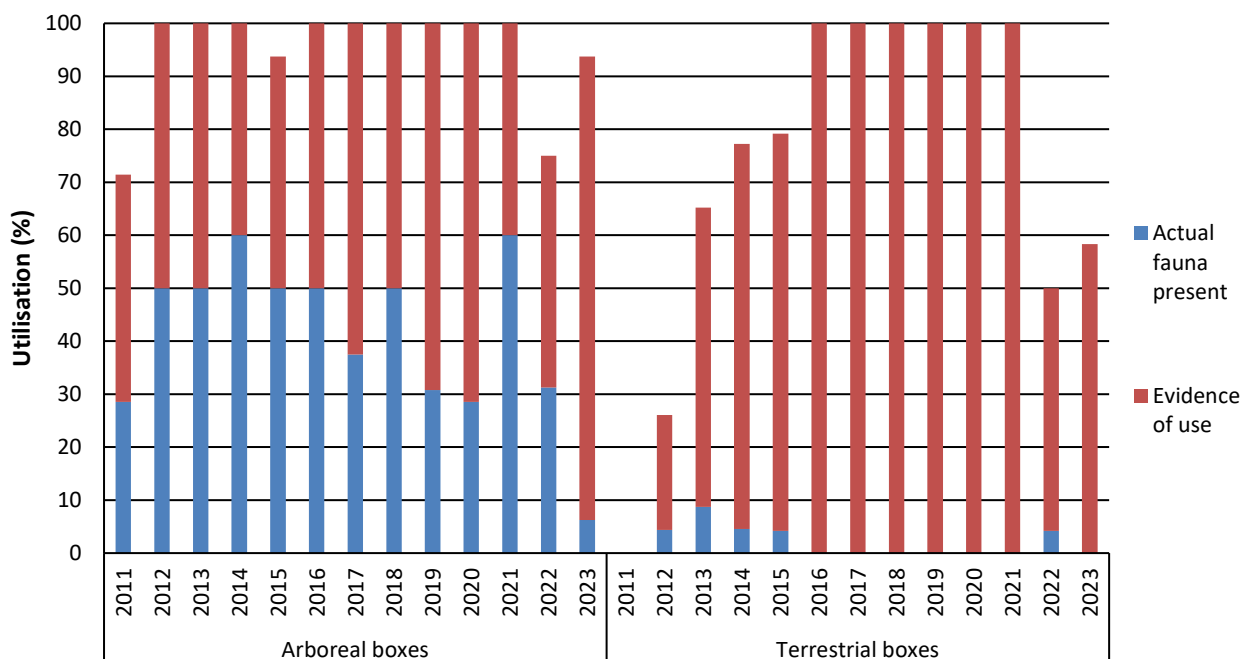


**Figure 16: Number of Sugar Gliders (*Petaurus breviceps*) observed in boxes 2011 – 2023.**

### 3.6.1 Arboreal nest boxes

Native fauna colonised the arboreal nest boxes soon after the installation, with fauna presence and evidence of use first being detected in 2011 (**Figure 17**). The overall utilisation of the boxes peaked in 2012 and remained stable until 2016. Since 2017, the overall number of utilised boxes has been declining. Compared to 2021, the rate of utilisation substantially increased in 2022 and this increase has continued in 2023 with 100% of available arboreal nest boxes containing evidence of habitation. The number of available boxes has been increased sharply and is likely responsible for the increasing rate of detected fauna due to replacement/reinstalment of new nest boxes in 2022.

All the arboreal nest boxes have been used at some point by *Petaurus sp.* (identified by an actual animal or by the distinctive nest shape constructed by the *Petaurus* genus). In 2023, 37.5% (6 of 16) of arboreal next boxes had recent evidence of utilisation by Sugar Gliders, with a further 12.5% (2 of 16) showing old evidence.



**Figure 17: Evidence of use per nest box type 2011 – 2023 (usable nest boxes only).**

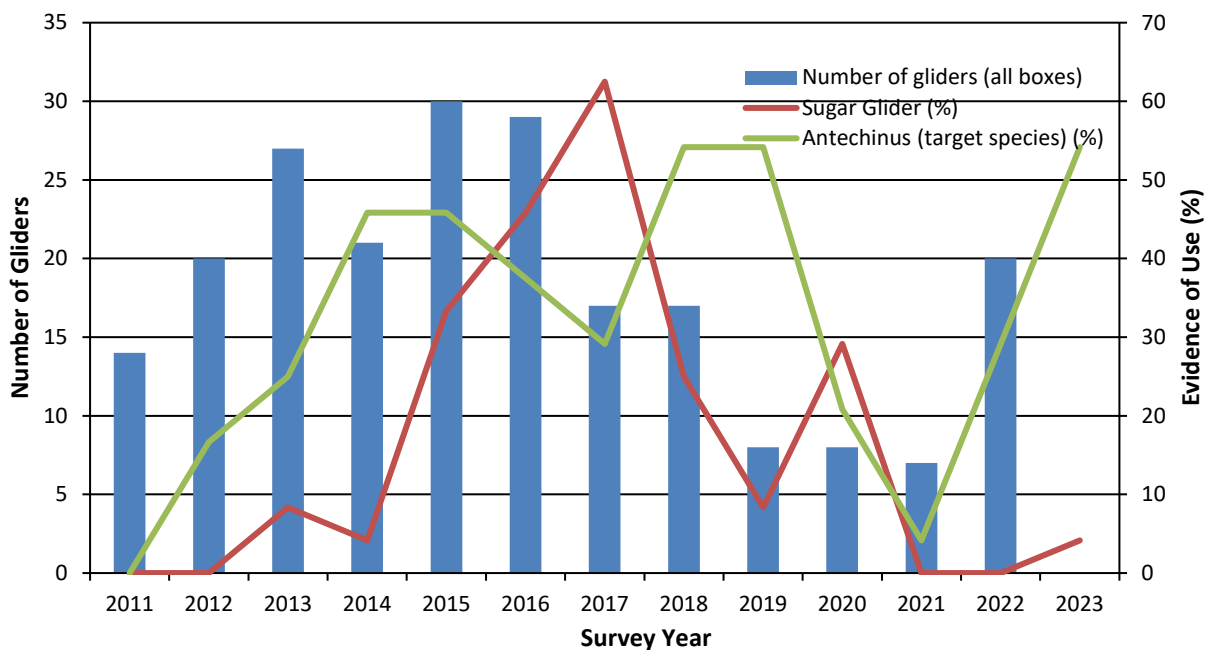
### 3.6.2 Terrestrial nest boxes

The total usage of available terrestrial nest boxes has increased from zero usage (2011) (**Figure 17**) to 58% in 2023. In the 2023 monitoring period 14 of the 24 available terrestrial boxes contained evidence of fauna use. Utilisation of terrestrial boxes by Sugar Gliders, evident by spherical shaped leaf nests was first detected in 2013, with 12.5% (3 of 24 boxes) presenting either old or recent evidence of use in 2023. All terrestrial nest boxes were replaced in April 2022, which saw a lower utilisation rate in 2022 as local fauna habituated to new boxes. As anticipated, 2023 witnessed an increase in usage of new nest boxes, to 58% up from 50% in 2022.

### 3.6.3 Sugar Glider population

Sugar Gliders have been recorded within the rehabilitation area since the first nest box monitoring event in 2011. In 2022, 20 individual gliders were recorded as using arboreal nest boxes only (note a count of 24 was previously reported in error, with four Antechinus erroneously included in this count). Arboreal nest boxes have almost been at capacity for the years 2013 to 2016 through the number of actual Sugar Gliders observed in the available boxes. It was therefore expected that, given the lack of natural tree hollows in the rehabilitated areas, Sugar Gliders would begin to take up residence in the available terrestrial nest boxes. Consequently, lower numbers of Antechinus use had been detected in nest boxes, with only four recorded in 2022, potentially due to utilisation by Sugar Gliders.

Sugar Glider utilisation was observed to decrease in 2023, thus Sugar Glider occupation of terrestrial nest boxes did not occur as predicted. The relationship between Brown Antechinus and Sugar Glider evidence of use (%) in terrestrial nest boxes is plotted in **Figure 18**. No actual presence of Sugar Gliders was observed as present across all nest box types in 2023, whilst evidence of Glider use of terrestrial nestboxes was low at 4.2% (1 of 24 boxes) (**Figure 18**). Percent evidence of use of terrestrial boxes by Antechinus was 54.2% in 2023, up from 29.2% in 2022.



**Figure 18: Evidence of use (%) of terrestrial nest boxes by Sugar Gliders and Antechinus, versus number of Gliders recorded (all boxes) 2011 – 2023.**

## 4. DISCUSSION

The rehabilitation area is showing positive signs of re-colonisation by a variety of fauna species. Over the course of the monitoring program, the total number of fauna species detected by the fauna surveys has remained reasonably constant (including the remnant quadrat), albeit fluctuating year to year (**Figure 4**). Surveys in 2023 detected a continued high species diversity (across all quadrats) as observed in 2022. This is potentially attributed to increased rainfall over the past 12-24 months allowing eastern Australia to emerge from a prolonged period of drought.

Bird, mammal and herpetofauna species counts have been variable throughout the 13-year survey period. For example, nine new fauna species were recorded in 2012, two new species in 2014, and five new species in 2016. However, several species recorded in previous survey periods were not recorded in 2017, 2018 and 2019. These changes are considered normal and are likely to continue as the vegetation structure matures addressing different species-specific requirements. In addition, the species detected during an annual survey period will depend largely on the weather conditions prior to, and during the survey period. Of note, as of 2017, the Brown Antechinus has been detected in all rehabilitation quadrats but was only detected within quadrat Q1 in the 2018 surveys. Whilst in the 2019 surveys the Brown Antechinus was detected in quadrats Q2, Q3 and Q4 but not within the remnant quadrat Q1 showing variability from year to year. In 2021/2022 the Brown Antechinus was captured in all quadrats, whilst in 2023 was only captured in quadrats Q3 and Q4. The variability in 2019 could be attributed to the severe drought conditions that were observed over the East coast of Australia and with wetter conditions in 2022, species returned to the rehab areas due to improved conditions. The lower capture numbers observed in 2023 again highlight year to year variability in population numbers.

#### 4.1 FAUNA DIVERSITY PER REHAB AGE

Non-metric Multidirectional Scaling (nMDS) analysis and cluster analysis were used to compare the faunal assemblages of each quadrat at two points in time; 2011 (four years post-rehabilitation), and 2015 (eight years post-rehabilitation) after monitoring began. The following abbreviations were used in the analysis and are discussed in the following section: REM = Remnant; REH1 = Q2, 2003-planted rehabilitation; REH2 = Q3, 2005-planted rehabilitation and REH3 = Q4, 2003 planted-rehabilitation.

The original hypothesis was that over time, as the age and structural complexity of the rehabilitation increases, species diversity will be equivalent to the diversity observed in the remnant forest quadrat Q1, REM. This was expected to take many decades, however as **Figure 10** and **Figure 11** shows, diversity in the two areas is already similar.

The 2011 faunal assemblages in the three quadrats in the rehabilitation area are clustered together and show 40-60% similarity but are only 20% similar to that of the remnant forest. However, after another four years, in 2015, all four quadrats are clustered together showing 40% similarity. In 2016, faunal assemblages of quadrats Q2 and Q3 were significantly more similar (60-80%) to the remnant quadrat than in 2015.

In 2023, the species diversity of the rehabilitated vegetation plots (quadrats Q2, Q3, and Q4) was found to be highly similar (60-80%). This differs from 2022 results in that quadrat Q4 is equally as similar to quadrats Q2 and Q3, whereas in 2022 it was 40-60% similar. This is likely attributed to the deployment of an Anabat within quadrat Q4 in 2021 since the beginning of the monitoring program. Five species of bat were detected in quadrat Q4 that were similar species to the other remnant plots.

Additionally, the assemblage of quadrat Q4 was less similar to quadrats Q2 and Q3 than the previous year, decreasing from 60-80% in 2021 to 40-60% in 2022. Despite this decrease, the overall similarity between the remnant and rehabilitated quadrats remains high. The overall decrease in fauna similarity may be attributed to general variation in fauna utilisation year to year or the somewhat later onset of the monitoring period, instead being in late December 2022.

In 2023, rehabilitation quadrats Q2-Q4 show 60-80% similarity, whilst collectively show 40-60% similarity to the remnant quadrat Q1. Thus, the overall trend as vegetation age increases, is one of increasing similarity between rehabilitation and remnant quadrat structural complexity as anticipated.

Overall, these findings show that the rehabilitation area is on a positive trajectory and is becoming more similar to the remnant forest whilst also experiencing phases where species richness fluctuates as seen in the 2023 data. It is apparent that the original proposal - that species diversity in the rehabilitation sites will move closer to the species diversity of the remnant vegetation site - is supported by the monitoring data (with some year-to-year variation).

## 4.2 FAUNA DIVERSITY VS. WOODY DEBRIS

Several studies comparing mature forest and rehabilitated sites have found positive correlations between rock cover and woody debris with small mammal species richness and total reptile and amphibian captures. Most studies have found a positive correlation between habitat heterogeneity/diversity and species diversity (Tews et al. 2004). However, this may vary considerably depending on species specific requirements.

A comparison of the total number of terrestrial species recorded at each quadrat since monitoring began was made to determine if there is a positive correlation between this and the total mass of woody debris. As **Figure 12** shows there was no relationship between woody debris and number of species recorded (woody debris dependent species only). The nMDS analysis was then used to determine if the composition of all terrestrial species was affected by the quantity of woody debris. The analysis, shown in **Figure 13**, highlights one cluster based on similarity of terrestrial species assemblages: quadrats Q2, Q3 and Q4, with quadrats Q1 having a lower similarity.

The mass of woody debris throughout quadrat Q2 and Q4 is heavily skewed due to two large fallen logs which is suspected to make up the majority of debris for that area. These two separate logs are not likely to provide significant amounts of refuge for fauna. The presence of large fallen branches is also absent from the rehab areas with the bulk of woody debris being categorised as immature trees which have fallen over due to poor ground stability. These, also, do not provide much refuge for fauna as they often do not fall flat on the ground, nor do they offer much cover underneath.

Originally it was expected that higher woody debris levels would result in greater species diversity. However, as the dataset has grown, it may be the case that woody debris levels may lead to greater abundance of a small number of species, not species diversity as a whole. As discussed previously, habitat structure and composition significantly affect the type and diversity of species present. For example, there is evidence that bird species diversity in forests is determined more by the physical structure of a plant community (i.e., how foliage is distributed vertically) than the diversity and quantity of vegetation (MacArthur and MacArthur 1961). This suggests that physical structure may be more important in promoting faunal re-colonisation than the actual composition of plant species and is an important consideration for land rehabilitation practices.

Future monitoring may benefit from surveys to determine species diversity within each quadrat in addition to a classification of each quadrat based on the complexity of its vegetation structure. These results, in conjunction with species diversity may provide insight into what specific factors (e.g., woody debris, vegetation structure) aid in fauna re-colonisation.

It may be that woody debris does affect fauna diversity and abundance but not in a linear pattern and that the differences in total mass of debris between quadrats are not great enough to cause marked differences in fauna species assemblage. Rather than the quantity of woody debris being the causal factor of terrestrial fauna species assemblage, it is possible that other factors, such as distance from the remnant forest or vegetation structure and complexity, or size of the woody debris are also important in shaping terrestrial species assemblage.



Strong winds during a storm early in 2015 blew over many of the trees in the rehabilitation area, effectively increasing the total mass of woody debris in the area. Future monitoring could benefit through the recalculation of the mass of debris at each quadrat to determine if this change has had an impact on fauna diversity.

### 4.3 VEGETATION STRUCTURE

Overstorey vegetation within sections of quadrats Q3 and Q4 has increased in height, with height starting to plateau during the past three years of monitoring as the trees mature, with only a slight increase in height in 2023 (~3 m in 2010, 4.5 m in 2011, 4.6 m in 2012, 5 m in 2013, 6 – 9 m in 2014, 7-10 m in 2015-2017, 8-12m in 2018 – 2021, 10-14m in 2022, and 15.5m in 2023). However, where trees are growing in proximity the canopy has become quite thick. This has resulted in some restricted growth and maturation of the trees in addition to preventing appropriate understorey growth and development. Other reasons for restricted growth could be too much competition or limited resources along with a drought period at the end of 2019. With wetter conditions over 2021-2023, the rehab recovered its foliage cover. An assessment of the average tree height was conducted in 2022 and 2023 with representative trees measured using range finders and an inclinometer.

Where the overstorey is not as dense or is absent (quadrats Q3 and Q4 compared to quadrat Q2), the understorey is more structurally and floristically diverse. These quadrats, Q3 and Q4 are comprised of tussock grasses, bare ground, rock, and pockets of leaf litter build-up below shrubs and juvenile trees. Improvements in understorey structure for quadrats Q3 and Q4 are shown with both quadrats containing Brown Antechinus during the 2023 monitoring event.

Poor regeneration of the shrub and ground layer could be due to the original high density of planting within quadrat Q2 of *Eucalyptus* and *Acacia* species which have formed a thick canopy preventing enough light to support understorey plants. During the 2022 assessment of vegetation structure, it was noted that the *Eucalyptus* species have continued to grow. All quadrats are dominated by a canopy of *Eucalyptus* which had formed dense thickets in some areas. Natural processes will allow the canopy to thin and clear over time in all quadrats (quadrat Q2 will be of interest and this process has started to occur between 2019 - 2023). This will in turn support greater understorey growth and diversity.

As noted above, the storm event in 2015 has caused some thinning of *Eucalyptus* trees across the rehabilitation sites. The impacts of this on ground and midstorey vegetation should be monitored in future survey events. During 2022-2023 surveys, no healthy trees were observed to have fallen over, with observations of an increase in foliage cover of the canopy species in 2022, following the drought period at the end of 2019.

The more complex ground cover and floristic diversity observed in quadrats Q3 and Q4 may be related to greater availability of light into those areas with less dense canopy. However, as observed throughout quadrat Q2, there are areas in quadrats Q3 and Q4 where the ground cover is poor due to *Eucalyptus* forming a closed canopy limiting light reaching the understorey. The ground layer structure of the three rehab quadrats is still relatively poor but is improving with grass cover and an increase in leaf litter observed in 2022-2023. The paucity of ground cover has initially inhibited recolonisation by small mammals due to a lack of shelter sites or habitat for their prey items. However, as the habitat matures, and the ground layer improves, native dasyurids such as the Brown Antechinus and native rodents such as the Bush Rat (*Rattus fuscipes*) are likely to increase in numbers which has occurred in 2023 with the Brown Antechinus continuing to be observed in both quadrats Q3 and Q4.

## 4.4 TERRESTRIAL AND ARBOREAL ANIMALS

The numbers of Brown Antechinus observed in quadrat Q1 had remained relatively consistent since surveys began in 2008 except for 2012 and 2019 when no Brown Antechinus were captured. The species was originally absent from the rehabilitated vegetation (quadrats Q2, Q3 and Q4) until 2014 where the first capture of an individual Brown Antechinus was recorded at Q4. Since then, the species has been recorded most years in every quadrat with numbers fluctuating over time. The numbers recorded in 2016 and 2018, were lower than usual (two and three captures in comparison to the yearly average of six), however recovered in 2020 with nine captures of Brown Antechinus within quadrat Q1 alone. In 2022, high numbers of Brown Antechinus were detected in remnant quadrats, attributed to favourable environmental conditions between 2021 and 2022 following the dry conditions in 2019. In 2023 Brown Antechinus numbers returned to lower than usual (one and two captures in quadrats Q3 and Q4 respectively). Decreased numbers may be associated with survey period falling in late November 2023. Males of this species are short-lived, dying shortly after reaching sexual maturity and mating in late winter. As such, the number of males may be lower in November than in late January where new immature males have become independent.

Despite the decrease in Brown Antechinus individuals potentially being attributed to seasonality of survey relative to breeding period, the species could act as an indicator species in determining the success of re-colonisation in the rehabilitated area. This is due to the sensitivity of this species to structural components such as understorey height and complexity, leaf litter and the abundance of logs. Previous observations of Brown Antechinus in quadrat Q2 are most likely due to its proximity to remnant vegetation. The nearby remnant vegetation has potentially aided in the re-colonisation of the rehabilitated area as species begin to forage in the new habitat. A similar trend was observed with the Common Brushtail Possum. This suggests that the rehabilitation area currently provides suitable foraging habitat for several species but may lack suitable nesting or breeding habitat for larger species.

The rate of nest box occupancy in the rehabilitation area supports these assumptions and highlights the importance of introducing habitat hollows into rehabilitation areas. In addition, the inconsistency in native terrestrial mammal observations in the rehabilitation area (quadrats Q2, Q3 and Q4) compared to the remnant habitat further suggests that the complexity of rehab vegetation does not match that of the remnant vegetation. Connectivity with remnant habitat is positive and will facilitate movement of native species into the rehabilitation area as suitable habitat becomes available.

Annual monitoring has shown slow improvements in the structure and complexity of the rehabilitation vegetation and further monitoring events will continue to provide insight into the relationship between the various vegetation/ground cover characteristics and fauna re-colonisation.

## 4.5 BATS

The recording of Microchiropteran bat species was added to the survey methodology in 2011 to determine whether bats are using the rehabilitation areas for foraging. In total, 13 species were detected in November 2023 including four threatened species: Little Bent-winged Bat (*Miniopterus australis*), Eastern Cave Bat (*Vespadelus troughtoni*), Greater broad-nosed Bat (*Scoteanax rueppellii*), and the Eastern Coastal Free-tailed Bat (*Micronomus norfolkensis*).

The highest number of bat species recorded within an individual quadrat (11 species) was recorded in 2016. In 2023, numbers of bat species recorded were found to be above average across all quadrats, excluding quadrat Q4 where bat survey methodology was employed for the first time in 2021, and an average is yet to be established. Similar species were identified in each quadrat

suggesting that the same bat species are utilising the remnant and rehabilitated vegetation. The survey methodology created in 2011 for bats did not previously include Anabat detectors in quadrat Q4, however this methodology was incorporated in 2021. A similar assemblage of bats was found in quadrat Q4 to the other three quadrats.

Microbats are primarily insectivores and are voracious feeders. Insects play important ecosystem roles by transporting pollen from one flower to another and thus achieving pollination. High pollination success is vital to the establishment of rehabilitated areas. It is encouraging to detect such a high number of microbat species not only from a fauna diversity perspective, but from an ecosystem perspective.

## 4.6 BIRDS

Species richness has varied slightly between each quadrat over the 11 years; however, quadrat Q1 has maintained the highest mean level of richness (**Figure 8**). This is not surprising as Q1 contains structurally diverse and complex habitat able to support different bird species and their habitat requirements. Several studies have confirmed this by showing that bird species richness was higher in complex revegetation compared to simple revegetation (Rossi 2003, Munro et al. 2007). Dynamic changes in species richness observed from year to year highlights the continual change in vegetation structure and complexity and can also be attributed to individual species' detectability and local climatic conditions.

Slight decline in overall species were observed from 2021, 2022 and through to 2023, with 32, 29 and 27 species recorded respectively, although with varying assemblages. The bird diversity for 2023 was slightly above the annual average, with many of the same species being found in all four quadrats. Several nectar feeding birds that have been detected in previous years at both remnant and rehab quadrats were observed in 2023 most likely due to the flowering nectar trees and continuing favourable conditions between 2021-2023 compared with drought years up to 2019. Other small to medium-sized insectivores were once again detected during the 2023 surveys within rehab quadrats including Spotted Pardalote (*Pardalotus punctatus*), Rufous Whistler (*Pachycephala rufiventris*), Eastern Yellow Robin (*Eopsaltria australis*) and Superb Fairy-wren (*Malurus cyaneus*). In 2023, diversity of birds recorded within the remnant vegetation (quadrat Q1) was slightly higher than in the rehabilitated vegetation (quadrats Q2, Q3, and Q4).

The species recorded in the rehabilitation areas compared to the remnant area are characteristic of the vegetation structure present. Many bird species found in the rehabilitation areas prefer scrub type vegetation and are more commonly found in open and fringe areas while some species that prefer forest with larger trees were only detected within the remnant quadrat.

Another sign indicating progress of the rehabilitation area is the presence of the hemiparasitic plant, Mistletoe, and the consistent recording of Mistletoe birds. Although Mistletoe birds were not observed in 2023, this is likely due to annual variability, with Mistletoe birds regularly recorded in rehab quadrats from 2009 on. Mistletoes are considered a keystone resource in forests and woodlands throughout the world and the Mistletoe bird, a specialist feeder on mistletoe fruit, is a key dispersal agent. Mistletoes provide food in the form of nectar, fruit and leaves to many bird and mammal species. They also provide a key foraging substrate for insectivorous species, as well as nesting sites for many bird species. Several studies have found greater vertebrate species richness associated with higher mistletoe densities (Watson 2001).

## 4.7 HERPETOFAUNA

Herpetofauna results have remained reasonably constant across the monitoring program. However, as ground cover and understorey continue to develop it is expected that more amphibian and reptile species will recolonise the area. As stated previously, the lack of light penetrating the closed canopy of the rehabilitation sites may be inhibiting re-colonisation. A lack of suitable water bodies within the rehabilitation areas may also be a limiting factor restricting reptile and amphibian re-colonisation. In 2023, the species richness of herpetofauna was relatively constant compared to the overall average.

## 4.8 NESTBOXES

Within the relatively new field of restoration ecology there is an assumption that successful rehabilitation of flora will facilitate fauna re-colonisation. However, natural tree hollows and remnant habitat required for successful re-colonisation can take decades if not hundreds of years to develop at a rehabilitation site.

To date, there have been very few studies which report successful fauna re-colonisation on mine sites and the effectiveness of artificial hollows/nest boxes within rehabilitation areas remains largely unknown. The information recorded from the 2023 nest box inspections is promising with 75% of all available arboreal and terrestrial nest boxes exhibiting actual use or evidence of use (an increase on 2022 usage at 65%) (**Figure 14**).

Usage rates were appearing to plateau from 2013 to 2015 but have had a positive trend in surveys from 2016-2021, whilst 2023 results show an increase on the slight decline recorded in 2022 (**Figure 15**). Arboreal nest boxes (**Figure 17**) reached a peak of 60% actual usage in 2014 but decreased to 6% in 2023. However, evidence of use remains high at 87.5% indicating on-going utilisation of arboreal nest boxes within, albeit with a slight decline on previous year averages.

**Figure 16** plots Sugar Glider numbers over time (2011 – 2023) with the results showing a steady increase in individual glider numbers from 14 in 2011 to 29 in 2016, however there has been a steady decrease in glider numbers from 2017 onwards, and despite the uptick of 24 individuals identified in 2022, there were no individuals identified in 2023. The sharp increase in glider numbers in 2022 was likely related to the large number of unavailable boxes replaced in April 2022, resulting in increased opportunities to record the species. Other potential factors behind the on-going trend of decline include seasonal variability or the presence of a predator species, such as the powerful owl foraging in the area.

The limited number of artificial arboreal hollows (tall nest boxes) in the rehabilitated areas have led to Sugar Gliders taking up residence in terrestrial nest boxes in previous survey periods. Nest boxes near to the ground are not typical nesting locations for Sugar Gliders as predation risks are higher. The target species for terrestrial nest boxes, Brown Antechinus, appeared to be competing for nest boxes in previous years as some individual boxes were found to have both a Sugar Glider nest as well as Antechinus scats.

In 2023, Sugar Glider use of arboreal nest boxes declined compared to previous survey periods, thus anticipated occupation of terrestrial nest boxes by Sugar Gliders did not occur. This left terrestrial nest boxes available for use by Brown Antechinus, with evidence of use by Antechinus increasing to 54% in 2023, up from 29% in 2022. A particular feature of the Antechinus recorded utilising the nest boxes in 2023 was the number of females with advanced juveniles, judged to be close to becoming independent. This is excellent evidence of fauna reproduction within the rehabilitation area.

The increase in nest box use by Brown Antechinus each year since 2011 has been a positive sign for the re-colonisation of the rehabilitation area. However, with the 2015 and 2016 results showing increased competition from Sugar Gliders for available nest boxes, the data began to show a decline in evidence of use by Brown Antechinus. In 2017 the results again showed an increase in evidence of use by Brown Antechinus, concomitant with evidence of glider use decreasing. This trend showing alternating fluctuations in denning use between Sugar Gliders and the Brown Antechinus from year to year has been sustained, with the decline in actual numbers of Sugar Gliders recorded in 2023 seeing Brown Antechinus again take dominance in terrestrial nest boxes.

Overall, the trends emerging after eight years of nest box monitoring continue to be positive. The continued uptake and high utilisation of all nest box types is an indicator of the potential of rehabilitated areas to support local fauna species. The observed encroachment of gliders using terrestrial boxes, most notable in 2017 and 2020, further demonstrates how vital hollow availability is to forest ecosystem restoration.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, the rehabilitation area is showing positive signs of re-colonisation by a variety of fauna species. The original proposition was that over time, as the age and structural complexity of the rehabilitation increases, species diversity will gradually match the diversity observed in the remnant forest (quadrat Q1, REM). This process was expected to take many decades, however as discussed above, the process is already being confirmed by the data analysis.

It is recommended that:

- Monitoring continue so that trends observed in the first 15 years may be better understood over a greater timeline.
- Nest boxes should continue to be monitored annually and any repairs/replacements made as required. To ensure that rehab areas continue to provide nesting habitat for fauna and to be able to quantify this, it is recommended that unavailable boxes be replaced or repaired prior to the next monitoring events in 2024.
- Consideration to be given to increasing the number of nest boxes throughout the rehabilitation area, given the evidence of usage of the current nest boxes. This would facilitate the colonisation of the rehab area by fauna.
- Control of weed species *Lantana camara* in the vicinity of the quadrats be undertaken to ensure this species does not become more widespread within the rehabilitation; and
- Monitoring woody debris every 3 to 5 years would provide insight into the natural decay process within the rehabilitation area. This in turn can be correlated to the success of the rehabilitation in terms of observed species richness. Furthermore, this information will allow informed recommendations regarding the initial rehabilitation design and management of ongoing natural processes as the rehabilitation is compared to the natural forest.

## 6. REFERENCES

- Bibby, C.J., Burgess, N.D. and Hill, D.A. (2000). *Bird Census Techniques*. Academic Press Limited, London.
- Butts, S.R. and McComb, W. (2000). Associations of Forest-Floor Vertebrates with Coarse Woody Debris in Managed Forests of Western Oregon, *The Journal of Wildlife Management*, 64:1, 95-104.
- Carey, A.B. and Johnson, M.L. (1995). Small mammals in Managed, Naturally Young, and Old-Growth Forests, *Ecological Applications*, 5:2, 336-352.
- Clarke, K.R. and Gorley, R.N. (2006). *PRIMER v6: User Manual/Tutorial*. PRIMER-E, Plymouth.
- Ecobiological (2008) Donaldson Rehabilitation Baseline Monitoring Report. Report prepared for Yancoal Australia Ltd.
- Ireland, T.T., Wolters, G.L. and Schemnitz, S.D. (1994). Recolonization of Wildlife on a Coal Strip-mine in North-western New Mexico, *The Southwestern Naturalist* 39(1): 53-57.
- Lada, H., Thomson, J.R., MacNally, R., Horrocks, G. and Taylor, A.C. (2007). Evaluating simultaneous impacts of three anthropogenic effects on a floodplain-dwelling marsupial *Antechinus flavipes*, *Biological Conservation* 134: 527-536.
- Loeb, S.C. (1999). Responses of Small Mammals to Coarse Woody Debris in a South-eastern Pine Forest, *Journal of Mammalogy*, 80:2, 460-471.
- MacArthur, R.H. and MacArthur, J.W. (1961). On bird species diversity, *Ecology*, 42, 594- 598.
- MacNally, R. (2006). Longer-term response to experimental manipulation of fallen timber on forest floors of floodplain forest in south-eastern Australia, *Forest Ecology and Management*, 229: 155-160.
- MacNally, R. and Horrocks, G. (2007). Inducing whole-assemblage change by experimental manipulation of habitat structure, *Journal of Animal Ecology* 76: 643-650.
- MacNally, R., Parkinson, A., Horrocks, G., Conole, L. and Tzaros, C. (2001). Relationships between terrestrial vertebrate diversity, abundance and availability of coarse woody debris on south-eastern Australian floodplains, *Biological Conservation*, 99: 191-205.
- Munro, N.T., Lindenmayer, D.B. and Fischer, J. (2007). Faunal response to revegetation in agricultural areas of Australia: A review, *Ecological Society of Australia* 8: 199-207.
- Robinson, R. (1997). Dynamics of coarse woody debris in flood-plain forests: impacts of forest management and flood frequency. BSc (Hons) Thesis, Charles Sturt University.
- Rossi S. (2003). Birds, mammals and their habitat in a variegated landscape in the western Strzelecki Ranges. Masters Thesis, School of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Science, Monash University, Melbourne, Vic.
- Tews, J., Brose, U., Grimm, V., Tielborger, K., Wichmann, M.C., Schwager, M. and Jeltsch, F. (2004). Animal species diversity driven by habitat heterogeneity/diversity: the importance of keystone structures. *Journal of Biogeography*, 31, 79–92.

Watson, D.M. (2001). Mistletoe – a keystone resource in forests and woodlands worldwide. *Annual Review of Ecological Systematics*, 32: 219-249



## APPENDIX A: FAUNA SPECIES RECORDED AT EACH QUADRAT PER YEAR

+ indicates presence # Listed on NSW BC Act 2016 * Introduced species		Q1 (remnant)												Q2 (rehab)													
Scientific Name	Common Name	'08	'09	'10	'11	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22	'23	'08	'09	'10	'11	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22	'23
		<b>Amphibians</b>																									
<i>Limnodynastes peroni</i>	Striped Marsh Frog																										
<i>Limnodynastes tasmaniensis</i>	Spotted Marsh Frog												+													+	
<i>Litoria latopalmata</i>	Broad-palmed Frog			+																							
<i>Pseudophryne bibronii</i>	Bibron's Toadlet				+																						
<i>Pseudophryne coriacea</i>	Red-backed Toadlet										+	+	+												+	+	
<b>Total</b>		0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
		<b>Birds</b>																									
<i>Sphecotheres vieilloti</i>	Australasian Figbird																										
<i>Cracticus tibicen</i>	Australian King Parrot																										
<i>Cracticus tibicen</i>	Australian Magpie					+							+														
<i>Corvus coronoides</i>	Australian Raven		+		+	+		+	+		+	+	+									+		+		+	
<i>Geopelia humeralis</i>	Bar-shouldered Dove				+		+						+				+	+					+				
<i>Manorina melanophrys</i>	Bell Miner											+															
<i>Coracina novaehollandiae</i>	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike				+	+	+				+		+									+	+		+	+	
<i>Elanus axillaris</i>	Black-shouldered Kite																										
<i>Gerygone mouki</i>	Brown Gerygone																										
<i>Acanthiza pusilla</i>	Brown Thornbill		+		+												+	+	+			+	+				
<i>Melithreptus brevirostris</i>	Brown-headed Honeyeater						+						+												+	+	
<i>Cacomantis variolosus</i>	Brush Cuckoo				+																						
<i>Acanthiza reguloides</i>	Buff-rumped Thornbill																										
<i>Scythrops novaehollandiae</i>	Channel-billed Cuckoo					+			+		+											+			+	+	
<i>Coracina tenuirostris</i>	Cicadabird	+			+			+	+			+	+	+											+	+	

+ indicates presence # Listed on NSW BC Act 2016 * Introduced species		Q1 (remnant)												Q2 (rehab)													
Scientific Name	Common Name	'08	'09	'10	'11	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22	'23	'08	'09	'10	'11	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22	'23
<i>Phaps chalcoptera</i>	Common Bronzewing																										
<i>Eurystomus orientalis</i>	Dollarbird																										
<i>Eudynamys orientalis</i>	Eastern Koel	+	+			+									+					+	+			+			
<i>Platycercus eximius</i>	Eastern Rosella										+		+												+		
<i>Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris</i>	Eastern Spinebill	+	+			+							+		+				+					+	+		
<i>Eopsaltria australis</i>	Eastern Yellow Robin		+				+	+	+		+	+		+		+	+	+		+		+	+	+		+	
<i>Cacomantis flabelliformis</i>	Fan-tailed Cuckoo														+				+				+				
<i>Calyptorhynchus lathami</i>	Glossy Black Cockatoo									+			+	+													
<i>Pachycephala pectoralis</i>	Golden Whistler								+		+	+									+	+				+	
<i>Cracticus torquatus</i>	Grey Butcherbird	+					+	+		+	+	+		+	+				+			+					
<i>Rhipidura fuliginosa</i>	Grey Fantail	+	+	+			+		+	+		+		+					+	+		+		+			
<i>Colluricincla harmonica</i>	Grey Shrike-thrush											+				+	+		+					+		+	
<i>Dacelo novaeguineae</i>	Laughing Kookaburra	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+				+				+	+			+		+		
<i>Myiagra rubecula</i>	Leaden Flycatcher				+						+				+												
<i>Meliphaga lewinii</i>	Lewin's Honeyeater								+				+														
<i>Hieraaetus morphnoides</i>	Little Eagle																										
<i>Glossopsitta concinna</i>	Little Lorikeet										+																
<i>Dicaeum hirundinaceum</i>	Mistletoebird		+		+						+	+					+		+		+		+	+			
<i>Glossopsitta concinna</i>	Musk Lorikeet																										
<i>Phylidonyris novaehollandiae</i>	New Holland Honeyeater																										
<i>Philemon corniculatus</i>	Noisy Friarbird	+	+		+			+	+		+	+	+	+				+		+	+		+	+			
<i>Oriolus sagittatus</i>	Olive-backed Oriole	+		+	+			+	+		+	+										+			+		
<i>Turnix varia</i>	Painted Button-quail															+											
<i>Cracticus nigrogularis</i>	Pied Butcherbird	+									+				+								+				
<i>Strepera graculina</i>	Pied Currawong	+		+			+	+				+					+							+	+		
<i>Ninox strenua</i>	Powerful Owl																										

+ indicates presence # Listed on NSW BC Act 2016 * Introduced species		Q1 (remnant)												Q2 (rehab)													
Scientific Name	Common Name	'08	'09	'10	'11	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22	'23	'08	'09	'10	'11	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22	'23
<i>Trichoglossus haematodus</i>	Rainbow Lorikeet	+		+		+				+	+	+	+	+								+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Neochmia temporalis</i>	Red-browed Finch															+											
<i>Anthochaera carunculata</i>	Red Wattlebird																										
<i>Rhipidura rufifrons</i>	Rufous Fantail																										
<i>Pachycephala rufiventris</i>	Rufous Whistler	+		+	+	+									+	+	+	+				+	+				
<i>Todiramphus sanctus</i>	Sacred Kingfisher	+			+	+	+	+	+	+	+			+													
<i>Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus</i>	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet									+		+															
<i>Myzomela sanguinolenta</i>	Scarlet Honeyeater				+	+	+		+			+	+						+			+			+		
<i>Zosterops lateralis</i>	Silvereye														+		+	+						+			
<i>Pardalotus punctatus</i>	Spotted Pardalote							+	+	+		+	+	+					+	+			+			+	
<i>Acanthiza lineata</i>	Striated Thornbill				+		+			+	+			+					+			+	+	+		+	
<i>Malurus cyaneus</i>	Superb Fairy-wren				+	+	+		+	+	+			+					+	+		+	+	+			
<i>Hirundo nigricans</i>	Tree Martin																										
<i>Malurus lamberti</i>	Variiegated Fairy-wren		+	+												+											
<i>Hirundo neoxena</i>	Welcome Swallow														+												
<i>Sericornis frontalis</i>	White-browed Scrubwren	+			+		+								+	+			+		+		+		+		
<i>Melithreptus lunatus</i>	White-naped Honeyeater	+													+												
<i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i>	White-throated Needle-tail			+																							
<i>Eurostopodus mystacalis</i>	White-throated Nightjar				+																						
<i>Cormobates leucophaeus</i>	White-throated Treecreeper		+			+	+				+	+	+											+		+	
<i>Corcorax melanorhamphos</i>	White-winged Chough			+											+				+								
<i>Rhipidura leucophrys</i>	Willie Wagtail												+														
<i>Acanthiza nana</i>	Yellow Thornbill		+																								
<i>Lichenostomus chrysops</i>	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Calyptorhynchus funereus</i>	Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo																										
Total		16	12	10	19	14	15	11	15	10	20	18	16	13	14	12	8	6	7	14	10	11	7	19	11	13	12

+ indicates presence # Listed on NSW BC Act 2016 * Introduced species		Q1 (remnant)												Q2 (rehab)													
Scientific Name	Common Name	'08	'09	'10	'11	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22	'23	'08	'09	'10	'11	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22	'23
		<b>Bats</b>																									
<i>Austronomus australis</i>	White-striped Mastiff Bat					+	+	+	+	+	+		+					+	+	+	+		+	+		+	+
<i>Chalinolobus gouldii</i>	Gould's Wattled bat					+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+					+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Chalinolobus morio</i>	Chocolate Wattled Bat						+		+	+		+		+						+	+	+					+
<i>Falsistrellus tasmaniensis</i>	# Eastern False Pipistrelle						+		+											+		+					
<i>Micronomus norfolkensis</i>	# Eastern Coastal Free-tailed Bat											+	+	+					+	+							
<i>Miniopterus australis</i>	# Little Bent-wing Bat				+		+	+	+	+	+	+		+						+	+	+		+	+		
<i>Miniopterus orianae oceanensis</i>	# Large Bent-winged Bat												+						+							+	
<i>Mormopterus ridei</i>	Eastern Free-tailed Bat						+			+	+	+	+	+					+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Myotis macropus</i>	# Southern Myotis						+													+							
<i>Nyctophilus sp.</i>	Unidentified Long-eared Bat sp.					+				+		+	+	+					+			+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Rhinolophus megaphyllus</i>	Eastern Horseshoe Bat						+																+	+			
<i>Scoteanax rueppellii</i>	# Greater Broad-nosed Bat											+	+						+				+	+			+
<i>Scotorepens orion</i>	Eastern Broad-nosed bat							+	+	+	+	+		+					+	+			+	+	+		
<i>Vespadelus darlingtoni</i>	Large Forest Bat																										
<i>Vespadelus pumilus</i>	Eastern Forest Bat											+	+	+	+				+		+	+		+	+	+	+
<i>Vespadelus troughtoni</i>	Eastern Cave Bat										+			+									+		+		+
<i>Vespadelus vulturinus</i>	Little Forest Bat					+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+					+	+	+			+	+	+	+
<b>Total</b>		0	0	0	1	4	9	4	7	9	8	10	9	9	0	0	0	7	5	11	6	6	7	9	9	7	9
		<b>Mammals</b>																									
<i>Antechinus stuartii</i>	Brown Antechinus	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+		+				+	+		+	+	+	+		
<i>Macropus giganteus</i>	Eastern Grey Kangaroo	+																									
<i>Macropus rufogriseus</i>	Red-necked Wallaby																										
<i>Mus domesticus</i>	*House Mouse																										
<i>Perameles nasuta</i>	Long-nosed Bandicoot											+															
<i>Petaurus breviceps</i>	Sugar Glider												+									+			+		

+ indicates presence # Listed on NSW BC Act 2016 * Introduced species		Q1 (remnant)												Q2 (rehab)													
Scientific Name	Common Name	'08	'09	'10	'11	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22	'23	'08	'09	'10	'11	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22	'23
<i>Rattus fuscipes</i>	Bush Rat														+			+									
<i>Rattus rattus</i>	*Black Rat					+										+										+	
<i>Sminthopsis murina</i>	Common Dunnart																										
<i>Trichosorus vulpecula</i>	Common Brushtail Possum		+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+						+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
<i>Wallabia bicolor</i>	Swamp Wallaby										+	+	+									+	+	+	+		
Total		2	2	2	2	3	2	1	2	1	3	4	4	0	1	2	0	1	0	2	2	2	3	3	3	5	1
		Reptiles																									
<i>Amphibolurus muricatus</i>	Jacky Lizard	+	+	+			+								+	+	+										
<i>Amphibolurus nobbi</i>	Nobbi Dragon																										
<i>Carlia tetradactyla</i>	Southern Rainbow Skink										+																
<i>Ctenotus robustus</i>	Robust Striped Skink																										
<i>Demansia psammophis</i>	Yellow-faced Whip Snake						+					+										+		+			
<i>Lampropholis delicata</i>	Garden Skink		+	+	+		+				+	+	+	+							+	+	+	+	+	+	
<i>Lampropholis guichenoti</i>	Grass Skink		+													+											
<i>Pogona barbata</i>	Eastern Bearded Dragon								+																		
<i>Pseudonaja textilis</i>	Eastern Brown Snake																										
<i>Varanus varius</i>	Lace Monitor	+		+																					+		
Total		2	2	3	3	1	0	3	0	1	0	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	1	2	1	1
Yearly Totals		20	17	16	24	21	29	16	25	20	34	35	30	24	17	15	9	14	12	27	19	21	18	34	25	26	24

+ indicates presence # Listed on NSW BC Act 2016 * Introduced species		Q3 (rehab)												Q4 (rehab)													
Scientific Name	Common Name	'08	'09	'10	'11	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22	'23	'08	'09	'10	'11	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22	'23
		Amphibians																									
<i>Limnodynastes peroni</i>	Striped Marsh Frog																										
<i>Limnodynastes tasmaniensis</i>	Spotted Marsh Frog																										
<i>Litoria latopalmata</i>	Broad-palmed Frog	+			+													+	+								
<i>Pseudophryne bibronii</i>	Bibron's Toadlet																										
<i>Pseudophryne coriacea</i>	Red-backed Toadlet											+	+					+	+					+	+		
Total		1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	
		Birds																									
<i>Sphecotheres vieilloti</i>	Australasian Figbird																								+		
<i>Cracticus tibicen</i>	Australian King Parrot											+		+													
<i>Cracticus tibicen</i>	Australian Magpie									+	+		+										+				
<i>Corvus coronoides</i>	Australian Raven	+						+			+	+	+											+			
<i>Geopelia humeralis</i>	Bar-shouldered Dove								+									+		+	+			+			
<i>Manorina melanophrys</i>	Bell Miner																										
<i>Coracina novaehollandiae</i>	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike						+				+											+					
<i>Elanus axillaris</i>	Black-shouldered Kite	+																+	+								
<i>Gerygone mouki</i>	Brown Gerygone																										
<i>Acanthiza pusilla</i>	Brown Thornbill		+	+	+				+			+	+	+									+				
<i>Melithreptus brevirostris</i>	Brown-headed Honeyeater																							+			
<i>Cacomantis variolosus</i>	Brush Cuckoo						+																				
<i>Acanthiza reguloides</i>	Buff-rumped Thornbill																			+							
<i>Scythrops novaehollandiae</i>	Channel-billed Cuckoo										+									+	+			+			
<i>Coracina tenuirostris</i>	Cicadabird								+	+	+		+											+	+		
<i>Phaps chalcoptera</i>	Common Bronzewing					+																					
<i>Eurystomus orientalis</i>	Dollarbird																										
<i>Eudynamys orientalis</i>	Eastern Koel																										
<i>Platycercus eximius</i>	Eastern Rosella																										

+ indicates presence # Listed on NSW BC Act 2016 * Introduced species		Q3 (rehab)												Q4 (rehab)														
Scientific Name	Common Name	'08	'09	'10	'11	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22	'23	'08	'09	'10	'11	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22	'23	
<i>Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris</i>	Eastern Spinebill				+	+						+										+						
<i>Eopsaltria australis</i>	Eastern Yellow Robin						+		+	+	+	+											+	+	+	+	+	
<i>Cacomantis flabelliformis</i>	Fan-tailed Cuckoo										+																	
<i>Calyptorhynchus lathamii</i>	Glossy Black Cockatoo																											
<i>Pachycephala pectoralis</i>	Golden Whistler						+	+			+			+							+			+				
<i>Cracticus torquatus</i>	Grey Butcherbird									+														+				
<i>Rhipidura fuliginosa</i>	Grey Fantail						+	+	+									+		+	+				+		+	
<i>Colluricincla harmonica</i>	Grey Shrike-thrush					+	+	+												+								
<i>Dacelo novaeguineae</i>	Laughing Kookaburra										+		+	+							+			+				
<i>Myiagra rubecula</i>	Leaden Flycatcher																								+			
<i>Meliphaga lewinii</i>	Lewin's Honeyeater												+											+				
<i>Hieraaetus morphnoides</i>	Little Eagle		+																									
<i>Glossopsitta concinna</i>	Little Lorikeet																											
<i>Dicaeum hirundinaceum</i>	Mistletoebird		+				+			+	+	+												+		+		
<i>Glossopsitta concinna</i>	Musk Lorikeet																											
<i>Phylidonyris novaehollandiae</i>	New Holland Honeyeater						+																					
<i>Philemon corniculatus</i>	Noisy Friarbird						+				+		+											+		+	+	
<i>Oriolus sagittatus</i>	Olive-backed Oriole				+																							
<i>Turnix varia</i>	Painted Button-quail	+	+	+	+																			+				
<i>Cracticus nigrogularis</i>	Pied Butcherbird																								+		+	
<i>Strepera graculina</i>	Pied Currawong										+		+															
<i>Ninox strenua</i>	Powerful Owl											+																
<i>Trichoglossus haematodus</i>	Rainbow Lorikeet					+					+	+												+	+	+	+	+
<i>Neochmia temporalis</i>	Red-browed Finch				+			+			+		+										+					
<i>Anthochaera carunculata</i>	Red Wattlebird										+																	
<i>Rhipidura rufifrons</i>	Rufous Fantail																											

+ indicates presence # Listed on NSW BC Act 2016 * Introduced species		Q3 (rehab)												Q4 (rehab)														
Scientific Name	Common Name	'08	'09	'10	'11	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22	'23	'08	'09	'10	'11	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22	'23	
<i>Pachycephala rufiventris</i>	Rufous Whistler	+		+	+	+			+			+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+			+	+		
<i>Todiramphus sanctus</i>	Sacred Kingfisher																					+						
<i>Trichoglossus chlorolepidotus</i>	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet													+														
<i>Myzomela sanguinolenta</i>	Scarlet Honeyeater				+	+		+	+			+	+	+				+						+	+	+		
<i>Zosterops lateralis</i>	Silvereye	+		+	+		+	+			+				+	+	+	+		+	+			+				
<i>Pardalotus punctatus</i>	Spotted Pardalote						+			+														+				
<i>Acanthiza lineata</i>	Striated Thornbill							+			+	+	+						+					+				
<i>Malurus cyaneus</i>	Superb Fairy-wren	+				+		+			+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+		+		+	+	+	+		
<i>Hirundo nigricans</i>	Tree Martin															+												
<i>Malurus lamberti</i>	Variiegated Fairy-wren	+														+	+								+			
<i>Hirundo neoxena</i>	Welcome Swallow															+												
<i>Sericornis frontalis</i>	White-browed Scrubwren	+					+	+								+		+							+			
<i>Melithreptus lunatus</i>	White-naped Honeyeater																											
<i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i>	White-throated Needletail																											
<i>Eurostopodus mystacalis</i>	White-throated Nightjar																											
<i>Cormobates leucophaeus</i>	White-throated Treecreeper											+														+		
<i>Corcorax melanorhamphos</i>	White-winged Cough																								+			
<i>Rhipidura leucophrys</i>	Willie Wagtail																									+		
<i>Acanthiza nana</i>	Yellow Thornbill																								+			
<i>Lichenostomus chrysoptus</i>	Yellow-faced Honeyeater			+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+			+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+		
<i>Calyptorhynchus funereus</i>	Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo																											
<b>Total</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	
		<b>Bats</b>																										
<i>Austronomus australis</i>	White-striped Mastiff Bat						+	+		+	+		+														+	+
<i>Chalinolobus gouldii</i>	Gould's Wattled bat				+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+													+	+	+
<i>Chalinolobus morio</i>	Chocolate Wattled Bat					+	+	+	+					+														



+ indicates presence # Listed on NSW BC Act 2016 * Introduced species		Q3 (rehab)												Q4 (rehab)																			
Scientific Name	Common Name	'08	'09	'10	'11	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22	'23	'08	'09	'10	'11	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22	'23						
<i>Falsistrellus tasmaniensis</i>	# Eastern False Pipistrelle						+		+																								
<i>Micronomus norfolkensis</i>	# Eastern Coastal Free-tailed Bat				+	+	+	+			+		+	+												+	+						
<i>Miniopterus australis</i>	# Little Bent-wing Bat						+					+		+											+								
<i>Miniopterus orianae oceanensis</i>	# Large Bent-winged Bat				+								+																				
<i>Mormopterus ridei</i>	Eastern Free-tailed Bat						+		+	+		+	+	+																			
<i>Myotis macropus</i>	# Southern Myotis				+		+																										
<i>Nyctophilus sp.</i>	Unidentified Long-eared Bat sp.					+					+	+		+											+	+	+						
<i>Rhinolophus megaphyllus</i>	Eastern Horseshoe Bat						+																										
<i>Scoteanax rueppellii</i>	# Greater Broad-nosed Bat									+																							
<i>Scotorepens orion</i>	Eastern Broad-nosed bat				+						+	+																					
<i>Vespadelus darlingtoni</i>	Large Forest Bat										+			+																			
<i>Vespadelus pumilus</i>	Eastern Forest Bat				+		+	+			+	+	+	+											+		+						
<i>Vespadelus troughtoni</i>	Eastern Cave Bat											+	+																				
<i>Vespadelus vulturnus</i>	Little Forest Bat				+		+	+		+	+	+	+												+	+	+						
<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>					
		<b>Mammals</b>																															
<i>Antechinus stuartii</i>	Brown Antechinus							+		+	+	+	+	+											+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+
<i>Macropus giganteus</i>	Eastern Grey Kangaroo																																
<i>Macropus rufogriseus</i>	Red-necked Wallaby																																
<i>Mus domesticus</i>	*House Mouse																																
<i>Perameles nasuta</i>	Long-nosed Bandicoot		+	+														+			+								+				
<i>Petaurus breviceps</i>	Sugar Glider											+																					
<i>Rattus fuscipes</i>	Bush Rat				+																												
<i>Rattus rattus</i>	*Black Rat		+			+	+									+	+			+							+						
<i>Sminthopsis murina</i>	Common Dunnart																										+						
<i>Trichosorus vulpecula</i>	Common Brushtail Possum								+	+	+	+	+					+									+	+	+	+	+	+	

+ indicates presence # Listed on NSW BC Act 2016 * Introduced species		Q3 (rehab)												Q4 (rehab)													
Scientific Name	Common Name	'08	'09	'10	'11	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22	'23	'08	'09	'10	'11	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22	'23
<i>Wallabia bicolor</i>	Swamp Wallaby																										
Total		0	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	3	1	1	1	2	0	2	2	1	1	2	4	2	3	2
		Reptiles																									
<i>Amphibolurus muricatus</i>	Jacky Lizard	+					+								+											+	
<i>Amphibolurus nobbi</i>	Nobbi Dragon																										
<i>Carlia tetradactyla</i>	Southern Rainbow Skink											+										+		+	+		
<i>Ctenotus robustus</i>	Robust Striped Skink		+													+	+	+									
<i>Demansia psammophis</i>	Yellow-faced Whip Snake			+						+												+		+			
<i>Lampropholis delicata</i>	Garden Skink						+		+													+	+			+	+
<i>Lampropholis guichenoti</i>	Grass Skink																										
<i>Pogona barbata</i>	Eastern Bearded Dragon																										
<i>Pseudonaja textilis</i>	Eastern Brown Snake															+							+				
<i>Varanus varius</i>	Lace Monitor											+															
Total		2	1	1	1	0	0	2	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	3	1	1	3	0	1	2	1	1	1	2	1
Yearly Totals		10	7	8	17	12	27	18	13	15	28	25	24	22	11	11	12	12	6	15	14	5	8	22	23	21	18

## **APPENDIX B: TERRESTRIAL AND ARBOREAL NEST BOXES**

---



**Plate 9: Arboreal Nest Box.**



**Plate 10: Terrestrial nest box.**



**Plate 11: Terrestrial nest box containing Antechinus nest.**



**Plate 12: Arboreal nest box containing old Glider bowl.**

## APPENDIX C: NATIVE FAUNA PHOTOS

---



**Plate 13: Garden Skink (*Lampropholis delicata*).**



**Plate 14: Brown Antechinus (*Antechinus stuartii*).**



**Plate 15: Brown Antechinus (*Antechinus stuartii*), mother and young showing evidence of successful reproduction.**



**Plate 16: Common Brushtail Possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*).**

## **APPENDIX D: LICENSING**

---

Wedgetail employees involved in the current study are licensed or approved under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 (License Number: SL102506, Expiry: 28 February 2024) and the Animal Research Act 1985 to harm/trap/release protected native fauna and to pick for identification purposes native flora and to undertake fauna surveys.



## APPENDIX E: STAFF CONTRIBUTIONS

The following staff were involved in the compilation of this report.

Name	Qualification	Title/Experience	Contribution
Nigel Fisher	BSc (Hons), PhD	Senior Ecologist	Project Mgt, Field Surveys, Report Review
Mark Dean	B EnvSc&Mgt	Senior Ecologist	Fauna Surveys, Report Writing
Jake Mauger	B EnvSc&Mgt	Ecologist	Report Writing
Debbie Plunkett	B NatResMgt.Hons.	Ecologist	Report Writing
Isaac Blundell		Trainee Ecologist	Fauna Surveys
Kane Blundell	BT/BA & GCert Spatial Science (in progress)	GIS Specialist	GIS Preparation

# Appendix 7

## Approval to Cease Independent Environmental Audits

(Total No. of pages including blank pages = 3)

**From:** Ann Hagerthy <Ann.Hagerthy@planning.nsw.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 31 October 2018 3:02 PM  
**To:** Phillip Brown  
**Cc:** James Benson; Leah Cook  
**Subject:** RE: Donaldson 2016/207 AR

Hi Phillip,

Thank you for your letter. The Department notes that Schedule 2, Condition 117 of DA 98/01173 and DA 118/698/22 states that Independent Environmental Audits (IEAs) are required at 3 yearly intervals and at the completion of mining, and notes that the consent for mining lapsed in 2013 with the last IEA completed in 2015. Please be advised that at this time the Department requires no future IEAs as required under Schedule 2, Condition 117 of DA 98/01173 and DA 118/698/22, unless otherwise directed by the Secretary.

Regards,

Ann Hagerthy, PMP  
A/Team Leader  
Compliance  
Department of Planning & Environment | [PO Box 3145 | Singleton NSW 2330](#)  
T [02 6575 3407](#) M [0428 976 540](#)  
E [ann.hagerthy@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ann.hagerthy@planning.nsw.gov.au)  
[compliance@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:compliance@planning.nsw.gov.au)



---

**From:** Phillip Brown <Phillip.Brown@yancoal.com.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 25 October 2018 2:02 PM  
**To:** Ann Hagerthy <Ann.Hagerthy@planning.nsw.gov.au>  
**Cc:** James Benson <James.Benson@yancoal.com.au>; Leah Cook <Leah.Cook@planning.nsw.gov.au>  
**Subject:** RE: Donaldson 2016/207 AR

Hello Ann

Further to the email below, please find enclosed Donaldson's response.

Regards

**Phillip Brown** | ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY RELATIONS SUPERINTENDENT

**Ashton Coal Operations Pty Ltd**

SITE: Glennies Creek Road, Camberwell NSW 2330  
POSTAL: PO Box 699 Singleton NSW 2330 Australia  
PHONE: +61 2 6570 9219  
MOBILE: 0439 909 952  
EMAIL: [Phillip.Brown@yancoal.com.au](mailto:Phillip.Brown@yancoal.com.au)  
WEBSITE: [www.ashtoncoal.com.au](http://www.ashtoncoal.com.au)



**From:** Ann Hagerthy [<mailto:Ann.Hagerthy@planning.nsw.gov.au>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 10 October 2018 1:02 PM  
**To:** Phillip Brown <[Phillip.Brown@yancoal.com.au](mailto:Phillip.Brown@yancoal.com.au)>  
**Cc:** James Benson <[James.Benson@yancoal.com.au](mailto:James.Benson@yancoal.com.au)>; Leah Cook <[Leah.Cook@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Leah.Cook@planning.nsw.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** RE: Donaldson 2016/207 AR

Hi Phillip,

Please find attached the Department's response letter to the 2016-2017 Annual Review. Please note that a revision is due 27 November 2018.

Regards,

Ann Hagerthy, PMP  
Senior Compliance Officer (Wed, Thu, Fri)  
Compliance  
Department of Planning & Environment | [PO Box 3145 | Singleton NSW 2330](#)  
T [02 6575 3407](tel:0265753407) M [0428 976 540](tel:0428976540)  
E [ann.hagerthy@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ann.hagerthy@planning.nsw.gov.au)  
[compliance@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:compliance@planning.nsw.gov.au)



---

**From:** Phillip Brown <[Phillip.Brown@yancoal.com.au](mailto:Phillip.Brown@yancoal.com.au)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 25 January 2018 12:44 PM  
**To:** Ann Hagerthy <[Ann.Hagerthy@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Ann.Hagerthy@planning.nsw.gov.au)>; DPE PSVC Compliance Mailbox <[compliance@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:compliance@planning.nsw.gov.au)>  
**Cc:** James Benson <[James.Benson@yancoal.com.au](mailto:James.Benson@yancoal.com.au)>  
**Subject:** Donaldson 2016/207 AR

Hello Ann

Please find enclosed the 2016/2017 Annual Review for Donaldson Coal.

Thanks

**Phillip Brown** | ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY RELATIONS SUPERINTENDENT

**Ashton Coal Operations Pty Ltd**

SITE: Glennies Creek Road, Camberwell NSW 2330  
POSTAL: PO Box 699 Singleton NSW 2330 Australia  
PHONE: +61 2 6570 9219  
MOBILE: 0439 909 952  
EMAIL: [Phillip.Brown@yancoal.com.au](mailto:Phillip.Brown@yancoal.com.au)  
WEBSITE: [www.ashtoncoal.com.au](http://www.ashtoncoal.com.au)



---

This email has been scanned by the Symantec Email Security.cloud service.  
For more information please visit <http://www.symanteccloud.com>

---