QCoal Pty Ltd

SONOMA COAL PROJECT

Commonwealth Environmental Protection And Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act

REFERRAL

Prepared by

McCOLLUM
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SERVICES

APRIL 2005

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

Referral Form

Important Note:

Please read the Referral Guide and associated Fact Sheets (available at http://www.deh.gov.au/epbc) carefully. The guide and Fact Sheets will help you to complete the form correctly and ensure that your referral is in a form that can be processed. The completed form, together with the required maps and any other information you may wish to submit, should be sent to the EPBC Act Referrals Section, Approvals and Wildlife Division, Department of the Environment and Heritage, GPO Box 787, Canberra, ACT, 2601 and/or by email to epbc.referrals@deh.gov.au (see Referral Guide for allowable electronic formats).

1. Contacts and proponent

1.1 Person making the referral

(Note: The term "person" can refer to an individual or a corporation)

The person making the referral can be either the person proposing to take the action, an agent acting on their behalf (eg, a consultant), or a government agency making the referral in relation to an action to be taken by another person. *(Include name, postal address, telephone, fax, email.)*

The applicant for this referral is QCoal Pty Ltd. The referral is being submitted and managed on behalf of QCoal Pty Ltd by McCollum Environmental Management Services Pty Ltd who is the contact for environmental matters relating to the project.

Contact details for all matters relating to the referral are as follows:

McCollum Environmental Management Services Pty Ltd
P.O. Box 8120
Mt Pleasant Qld 4740
Ph: 07-4953 2700
Fax: 07-4953 2755
paul@mems.com.au

1.2 Person(s) proposing to take the action

This is the person who proposes to carry out the action, or who is otherwise responsible for the action. If approval is necessary, this is the person to whom the approval will be granted, and they will be responsible for meeting any conditions of approval. *(Include name postal address, telephone, fax, email – if same as person making the referral, write "as above".)*

QCoal Pty Ltd is the company responsible for taking the action. QCoal Pty Ltd is a privately owned Queensland company, based in Brisbane. The personal contact within QCoal Pty Ltd is the Managing Director Mr Chris Wallin and contact details are as follows:

QCoal Pty Ltd
1095 Waterworks Road
The Gap Qld 4061
Ph: 07-3300 1111
Fax: 07-3300 4131
chrisw@energyminerals.com.au

If a corporation is proposing to take the action, please ensure you provide the name of a contact officer for this matter.

1.3 Person(s) who will be the proponent for the action

The proponent is responsible for preparing all documentation for the assessment process, if the action requires approval. If the proponent is the same as the person proposing to take the action, write 'as above'. If the proponent is different from the person proposing to take the action, the signature of both is required (at Section 7.3). *(Include name(s), postal address, telephone, fax, email)*

The proponent for this referral application is QCoal Pty Ltd. Contact details for QCoal are as nominated above.

If a corporation is the proponent for the action, please also provide the name of a contact officer for this matter.

2. Description of the proposal

2.1 Provide a *summary description* of the action (two or three sentences)

The action is the construction and operation of the Sonoma Coal Project which is proposed to be an open cut coal mine. The mine is expected to produce approximately 30 million tonnes of product coal, primarily export coking coal, with lesser amounts of thermal coal for both the export and domestic markets. The annual output is expected to be 2 million tonnes per annum, with an anticipated mine life of 15 years.

2.2 Details of the *location* of the project area

Where the project is of less than 1 km^2 in size, provide the location as a single pair of latitude and longitude references. Latitude and longitude references should be used instead of AMG and/or digital coordinates.

Locality:

Latitude:	degrees:	minutes:	seconds:
Longitude:	degrees:	minutes	seconds:

Where the project area is greater than 1 $km^{2,}$ or any dimension is greater than 1 km, provide additional coordinates to enable accurate identification of the location of the project area.

The project is located on the Sonoma and Belmore properties, adjacent to the Bowen Developmental Road approximately 7 km to the south of the township of Collinsville in North Queensland. Figures 1 and 2 show the project location.

The project area is comprised of three proposed Mining Leases (Sonoma-1, Sonoma-2 and Belmore-1), separated by property boundaries and the Bowen Development Road. Map Grid Australia - 92, (MGA-92) coordinates for each of the proposed lease areas is shown below.

Proposed Mine Lease Coordinates (MGA-92)

Sonoma - 1	
Eastings	**Northing**
584496.2	7721077.041
586106.359	7721967.017
586524.519	7721210.475
588013.62	7722034.105
587801.302	7721534.186
587343.094	7721275.501
587433.943	7721102.887
587938.959	7721036.725
588117.51	7720997.077
589701	7722124.37
589638.051	7722266.552
589178.878	7722343.643
589191.089	7722468.751
589214.17	7722530.092
589282.261	7722624.166
589488.859	7722467.144
589525.785	7722436.499
589607.105	7722351.79
589661.11	7722282.508
589711.917	7722202.749
589761.559	7722103.388
589795.735	7722011.492
589820.64	7721916.765
589834.903	7721827.353
589869.564	7721522.419
589873.033	7721453.197
589876.591	7721382.217
589882.01	7721327.955
589884.53	7721302.721
589908.106	7721185
589989.926	7720464.7
589997.432	7720390.631
590003.615	7720291.594
590005.997	7720199.147
590003.452	7720073.571
589998.281	7719994.138
589993.316	7719933.494
589855.608	7718584.645
584496.2	7719266.184

Sonoma - 2	
Eastings	**Northing**
589304.079	7722747.865
590396.045	7723351.837
591770.166	7723351.837
593335.612	7719454.666
593918.74	7718067.553
589964.145	7718570.836
590126.169	7720163.27
589995.345	7721315.127
589929.584	7721898.083
589917.36	7721971.718
589899.248	7722046.842
589873.184	7722127.364
589838.739	7722203.631
589799.883	7722275.971
589764.22	7722330.834
589700.709	7722412.606
589610.599	7722505.331

Belmore - 1	
Eastings	**Northing**
585649.667	7719119.501
589855.608	7718584.645
589734.347	7717392.571
589619.459	7716260.437
589535.127	7715429.396
589254.15	7716419.781
585531.416	7718183.079

Please provide a brief physical description of the project area, including the size of the development footprint or work area in hectares (a more detailed description is required at Part 3 of this form).

The project area is located in the northern area of the Queensland Bowen Basin coal fields. Proposed mining areas will be subject to an application for three mining leases covering approximately 3500 hectares. It is proposed to disturb approximately 900 to 1,100 hectares of this area for open cut mining activities such as mining pits, overburden dumps, haul roads and infrastructure.

The area is predominantly cleared grazing lands on black soil plains. The dominant landform is flat to slightly undulating plains. The land has been used over a prolonged period for beef cattle grazing and as a result the natural landscape has undergone considerable disturbance and modification. Existing coal mining operations are located nearby to the project area.

The development area is drained by Coral Creek which runs along the northern margins of the proposed development area. Although highly ephemeral, Coral Creek is a sizeable watercourse with high banks and terraces. Coral Creek is a tributary of Pelican Creek which flows into the Bowen River about 25 km to the west of the area. The Bowen River is the nearest semi-permanent watercourse in the region.

(Refer attached maps of the area; Figures 1 and 2.)

Attach an A4/A3 size map(s) showing the location and approximate boundaries of the area in which the project is to occur (this map, or a second attached map, should also show features mentioned in responses to questions in Part 3 of this referral, for example, conservation reserves, areas of remnant native vegetation, streams and roads).

2.3 Provide the *timeframe* in which the action is proposed to occur. Include start and finish dates where applicable.

The timeframes for construction and operation of the project will depend on the mining lease application process and subsequent grant of the mining leases. Following grant of the mining leases over the area, construction of the project is proposed to commence immediately. It is anticipated that construction will begin in mid 2006. Construction is expected to take 12 to 18 months with mining expected to begin within 8 months following the commencement of construction. The life of mining is to be approximately 15 years with rehabilitation works to continue for 3 to 7 years post mining.

2.4 Provide a *description* of the action, including *all activities* proposed to be carried out as part of the proposed action.

The proposed action will be a truck and shovel operated open cut coal mine. There will be a primary open cut pit with initial box cut overburden material to be hauled to out of pit overburden dumps and used in flood levees. As mining progresses and sufficient room becomes available, overburden will be dumped in the mined out pit areas.

The proposed mine is expected to produce approximately 30 million tonnes of product coal, primarily export coking coal, with lesser amounts of thermal coal for both the export and domestic markets. The annual output of product coal is expected to in the order of 2 million tonnes per annum, with an anticipated mine life of 15 years. The main features of the project are:

- The initial development of the Sonoma deposit, followed by ongoing mining operations;
- The construction of:

- flood control levees alongside Coral Creek to prevent ingress of floodwaters to pit operations;
- environmental and cultural heritage buffer between Coral Creek and the mining operation;
- coal preparation plant & handling facilities;
- rail loop and loadout facilities;
- topsoil stockpiles;
- water supply infrastructure;
- run-of-mine (ROM) coal stockpiles;
- overburden dumps; and
- basic support facilities, such as offices, crib rooms, communication systems, electrical supply, access roads, bath houses, potable water supply facilities, sewage treatment plants, workshops and fuel storage and distribution facilities.

- The implementation of a water management strategy including sedimentation dams and water management infrastructure that minimises any impacts on surrounding water courses; and
- The rehabilitation of all mining disturbance as soon as practicable after mining.

2.5 Provide an *explanation of the context* in which the action is proposed to take place, including any relevant planning framework (for example, relevant management plans or State or Local Government approvals). Indicate whether, and in what way, the action is *related to other actions or proposals* that may have already occurred, are occurring, or are likely to occur, at a future date. You should also provide the name(s) of the Local Council and/or Local Government Area the action will take place in, if relevant.

The proposed action is to undergo approval processes under the Queensland *Mineral Resources Act 1989* (MR Act) and the Queensland *Environmental Protection Act 1994* (EP Act). An application for a voluntary Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be made to the Queensland Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Mining leases will be applied for under the MR Act along with an Environmental Authority (EA) application under the EP Act. The Environmental Authority application will be supported by the EIS which will contain an Environmental Management Overview Strategy (EMOS). The EIS will detail all environmental values associated with the area subject to the proposal and provide appropriate control strategies to minimise the impacts. The EIS will also propose relevant EA conditions for the project.

Assessment of the voluntary EIS application by the Queensland EPA will not be completed until this referral application has been assessed.

Following grant of mining leases and the EA, Plans of Operations will be submitted to the EPA throughout the life of the project. The Plans of Operations will outline mining processes and control strategies for compliance with the strategies outlined in the EIS and Environmental Authority conditions.

This action will not form part of, or relate to any other action or proposal in the area. There are numerous other operating coal mines in the area surrounded by the action which are not directly associated with this action. These mines operate under separate approvals obtained through the relevant legislative systems. Mining operations will occur in a similar manner and on an intermediate scale to these existing projects.

The action will occur in the area covered by the Bowen Shire Council in North Queensland.

2.6 If you are considering making a referral of a stage or component of a larger action, you must provide information about the larger action and details of any interdependency between the stages/components and the larger action. If appropriate, you may also provide justification as to why you believe it is reasonable for the proposed action, that is the subject of this referral, to be considered separately from the larger proposal (see the Referral Guide).

Section 74A of the EPBC Act provides that the Environment Minister may not accept a referred action that is a component of a larger action. If the Environment Minister does not accept the referral, he or she is not permitted to make a decision on whether the action is a controlled action. The Environment Minister may request the person proposing to take the action to refer the larger action for consideration under the EPBC Act (see also Fact Sheet).

In the context of this application, this referral application is a stand alone project and is not a part of a staged project or a component of a larger action.

3. Description of the project area and the affected area

Note: You must include a *map(s)* clearly showing the location of the action, and any relevant features referred to in 3.1. (A general location map (eg, 1:250 000 scale) and a more detailed map showing the elements of the proposal may be appropriate. If available, an aerial photograph or other photograph of the site can be included.)

3.1 Describe the affected area, referring, as appropriate, to attached maps. In particular, indicate on the map the location of any of the following features: World Heritage properties, Ramsar wetlands, listed threatened species or communities and/or known habitat for these species or communities, listed migratory species and/or known habitat for these species, Commonwealth marine areas and Commonwealth land, conservation reserves/parks, and areas of remnant native vegetation.

As detailed in section 2 of this application and on the attached maps, the action is located on the Sonoma and Belmore properties to the south of Collinsville in the Queensland Bowen Basin, see Figures 1 and 2. The town of Collinsville is located within the Bowen Shire approximately 80km south west of the town of Bowen. Mining in the Collinsville area began in the 1880's and the area is now dominated by beef cattle grazing and coal mining.

A search of the Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act) database has not identified any World Heritage properties, National Heritage places, wetlands of international significance or Commonwealth marine areas within or nearby to the area subject to the action. There are also no Commonwealth lands, Commonwealth Heritage places, listed marine species, Commonwealth or State Reserves, critical habitats or regional forest agreements nominated within the region.

The threatened ecological communities of bluegrass grasslands and brigalow communities are known to occur in the region. However, results of the Project Flora Survey conducted by Central Queensland University, (CQU) in September 2004 (flora survey) indicate that, at the time of the survey bluegrass was not present and there was little remaining Brigalow within the remnant stands of vegetation within the proposal boundaries. However, the flora survey has aligned some small stands of remnant vegetation with Endangered Regional Ecosystems, (ERE's) as defined under the EPA Biodiversity Status System, see Figure 3 and Table 1. The flora survey identified inaccuracies in the EPA broad scale mapping of RE biodiversity status. An application to correct these inaccuracies will be initiated through the DNRM and EPA systems providing for RE refinement.

No endangered plant species of national environmental significance are listed to occur in the area, with only three vulnerable species likely to occur (*Croton magneticus, Eucalyptus raveretiana and Leucopogon cuspidatus*). Of these plant species *Eucalyptus raveretiana* was the only species identified in the project area and was restricted to the remnant vegetation communities along Coral Creek. The Black Orchid (*Cymbidium canaliculatum)* which is a protected species under the Nature Conservation Act due to it's commercial value was identified as an epiphyte on older trees within the project area, however, it was not likely to present commercial value due to the areas of woodlands with larger trees being small.

Under the EPBC Act, one endangered bird species, the Star Finch has been listed as likely to occur within the area, however no individuals were identified during the Project Fauna Survey of the project area conducted during September 2004 by CQU (fauna survey). Four vulnerable bird species (Red goshawk, Squatter Pigeon, Black-throated finch, Australian Painted Snipe) have also been listed as likely to occur within the area. Only the Squatter Pigeon was identified in the area during the fauna survey and was associated with the remnant vegetation along Coral Creek. Only one vulnerable mammal species, the Spectacled flying-fox, and one vulnerable reptile species, the Yakka Skink, are listed as likely to occur within the area, neither of which were identified during the fauna survey.

Several terrestrial and wetland migratory bird species and their habitats have been listed as likely to occur in the area with one species (Spectacled monarch) listed as likely to breed in the area. No significant migratory species were identified during the fauna survey.

(Refer to sections 2 and 3.2 for further detailed descriptions of the area.)

3.2 Provide a *description of important features* of the project area and the affected area and show these on the attached map, including (if relevant to the project area or affected area) information about:

(a) soil and vegetation characteristics;

The area lies within land zone 9 of the Brigalow Belt bioregion of Queensland and is comprised primarily of cleared grazing lands. The dominant landform is undulating with low hills / ridges, sloping between 2 and 4% and trending towards Coral Creek and it's tributaries as the main drainage features of the area. The land has been used over a prolonged period for beef cattle grazing and as a result the natural landscape has undergone considerable disturbance and modification.

The geology of the area consists of Upper Permian deposits from the Blackwater Group and the Blenheim Subgroup. Outcrops in the Blackwater Group include lithic sandstone, siltstone, quartzose sandstone, carbonaceous shale with coal seams, pebble and cobble conglomerate, dolomitic and calcareous sandstone, tuff and plant fossils (petrified wood). Outcrops in the Blenheim Subgroup include siltstone, sandstone, fossiliferous calcareous sandstone, coquinite, limestone and marine fossils.

The soils of the proposed project area were surveyed by Global Soil Systems (GSS) in August 2004. Dark grey uniform soils with medium clay textures dominate the site, a gradational variant to the dominant unit occurs with coarser texture throughout and an orange brown gradational sandy loam adjoins Coral Creek. A red duplex soil unit is evident throughout the southern section of project area, see Figure 3. The soils are generally non-saline and non-sodic with little potential for acid generation.

The results of the flora survey conducted by Central Queensland University (CQU) in September 2004, confirm approximately two thirds of the project area is comprised of areas cleared for grazing including pasture grasses and associated regrowth, the remaining third is comprised of grazing impacted remnant vegetation of varying condition, see Figure 3 and Table 1. The project area has a high infestation of Prickly Acacia with some scatterings of Parthenium, Prickly Pear and Harissia Cactus.

The flora survey identified 113 plant species which could be aligned with eight Regional Ecosystems, (RE's). The most significant stands of vegetation are woodlands and forests associated with Coral Creek and associated alluvial plains. There are some other well developed stands on the low hill running from the centre of the project area to the south towards Two Mile Creek which contains a small patch of Endangered RE 11.9.4, see Figure 3 and Table 1. The woodlands on the alluvial plains are *Eucalyptus* and *Corymbia* dominated with very little Brigalow (*Acacia harpophylla*) remaining. *Eucalyptus tereticornis* and *E. raveretiana* dominate the fringing vegetation on Coral Creek while most of the woodlands on the low hills have a species mix similar to the alluvial plains but also includes patches of *E. orgadophila* dominated woodland. Of the RE's represented on the project site, two were listed as endangered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) biodiversity status system, (RE11.4.9 and RE11.9.4). Of the remaining six RE's, two were listed as Of Concern and four Not Of Concern.

(b) water flows, including rivers, creeks and impoundments;

The development area is drained by Coral Creek which runs along the northern margins of the proposed development area, see attached figures. Smaller gullies drain the area in the central and southern parts of the project area. Although intermittent, Coral Creek is a sizeable watercourse with high banks and terraces. Coral Creek is a tributary of Pelican Creek which flows into the Bowen River about 25 km to the west of the area. The Bowen River is the nearest semi-permanent watercourse in the region.

The banks of Coral Creek are composed of well-drained, sandy alluvial deposits. Alluvial deposits within the project area are up to 20 m deep. Stands of intact riparian vegetation line the creek banks. The creek banks have very little surface cover of grasses due to the effects of grazing and the current drought conditions in the Collinsville area.

Other minor watercourses in the project area include Belmore Gully which crosses the central area of the project and Two Mile Creek in the south western area of the project. As a result of grazing impacts, these gullies are dissected by eroded gullies.

(c) the presence of outstanding natural features, including caves;

The only outstanding natural feature within the vicinity of the proposed action is Coral Creek which lies to the north outside the proposed area of disturbance, shown on the attached figures. There are no other outstanding natural features such as caves in the area.

(d) gradient;

The landscape within the area of the proposal is gently undulating with low ridges, sloping between 2 and 4%.

(e) any buildings or other infrastructure;

The project is located adjacent to the Bowen Developmental Road, the Newlands to Abbott Point rail line and the Bowen River pipeline. The Collinsville airstrip lies immediately north of Coral Creek. The Sonoma property homestead lies approximately 3km to the west of the project. There is no other major infrastructure in the immediate vicinity of the project. Collinsville township is located approximately 7km to the north and the satellite township of Scottville is located approximately 5 km to the north west of the project.

(f) any marine areas;

There are no marine areas within the vicinity of the project.

(g) kinds of fauna in the area; and

Fauna known to occur and previously identified in the region include Litoria and Limnodynastes amphibian species, numerous reptile species such as skinks, gecko's, snakes, and monitors, numerous bird species, possums, kangaroos, wallabies, bats, hares and other common mammal species of the area.

The fauna survey of the project area conducted by CQU during September 2004, identified 79 vertebrate species including, 10 lizards, 59 birds, five non microchiropteran mammals and four bat species. The absence of amphibian species during the survey is attributed to the lack of available water resulting from the drought conditions of the region.

It is expected that the presence of fauna species and their habitats have been severely affected by the clearing and cattle grazing on the Sonoma, Belmore and surrounding properties. Pest species common to the area include the Cane toad (*Bufo marinus*), feral cats, wild dogs, feral pigs and rabbits.

The riparian vegetation bordering Coral Creek provides most of the available habitat for the majority of fauna species in the vicinity of the project due to it's relatively uncleared status.

(h) the current state of the environment in the area, including information about the extent of erosion, whether the area is infested with weeds or feral animals and whether the area is covered by native vegetation or crops.

As detailed previously, the area has been subject to extensive clearing and intensive beef cattle grazing. As a result, several of the small drainage lines show signs of erosion. Grass cover in the area is minimal due to the drought conditions being experienced in the region.

Weed species include Parthenium, Harrisia cactus, prickly acacia and prickly pear. Feral animals knows to the area include the Cane toad (*Bufo marinus*), feral cats, wild dogs, feral pigs and rabbits.

3.3 What is the *tenure* of the project area (for example is it freehold, leasehold or some other tenure)? If practicable, show on the attached map.

The underlying tenures of the proposal are Sonoma Property: Lot 25 Crown Plan DK 276, tenure reference GHFL 5/2109 in the County of DRAKE, parish of SONOMA and Belmore Property: Lot 3 Survey Plan 134564 in the county of DRAKE, Parish of BIRRALEE. The Sonoma property is a 14,470 hectare Grazing Homestead Freeholding Lease owned by Diane R Watts and Clive E. Watts. The Belmore property is a 4,450 hectare freehold tenure owned by Yvonne L. Cox.

3.4 What are the current and/or proposed *land uses* for the project area?

As detailed in the above sections, the land is currently used for beef cattle grazing with the majority of the area cleared of native vegetation. One of the landowners has also imported camels to assist in the control of some woody weed species.

It is proposed to use the area of interest for open cut coal mining and associated activities, which will involve: clearing, topsoil stripping and stockpiling, infrastructure development, open pit development, waste dumps, process waste storage, and subsequent rehabilitation.

Early investigations indicate that the rehabilitation of the mining operation will target an ecosystem dominated by native species, with some of the low elevation landforms to be available for a land use similar to the pre-mining use of grazing if required. Conservative estimates indicate that the area rehabilitated to native ecosystems will be at least 1.3 times the area of remnant vegetation initially cleared for project development.

4. Nature and extent of the likely impacts of the action

4.1 Describe, as relevant to your project, the nature and extent of *likely impacts* on the following matters protected by the EPBC Act:

- the world heritage values of a declared World Heritage property; or
- the ecological character of a declared Ramsar wetland; or
- the members of a listed threatened species (except a conservation-dependent species) or any threatened ecological community, or their habitat, or
- the members of a listed migratory species or their habitat; or
- the environment in part of the Commonwealth marine area; or
- the environment on Commonwealth land.

As detailed in section 3.1, the action will not impact on any World Heritage properties, National Heritage places, wetlands of international significance, Commonwealth marine areas, Commonwealth land, Commonwealth Heritage places, Commonwealth or State Reserves, critical habitats or regional forest areas. None of these sites have been identified in the vicinity of the project.

Due to the nature of the existing land use, it is not expected that the project will have a significant impact on any threatened species, ecological communities or their habitats. The area has undergone significant clearing and has been further impacted by the grazing of cattle. There are obvious infestations of numerous weed species as a result of the current land use.

The project will include clearing of some existing vegetation for the mining pit, overburden dumps, access roads and mine infrastructure, including approximately 58 hectares of remnant vegetation classified as ERE (RE11.4.9), see Figure 4. Of the ERE unit to be cleared approximately 68% is comprised of regrowth which presents limited fauna habitat value. Clearing will be restricted to the areas necessary for the development of the mine, no unnecessary clearing will occur.

Post mining the area is expected to provide habitats for the colonisation of the area by native fauna species. These habitats will include permanent and semi permanent water bodies, native tree and shrub species, and native grasses.

The riparian vegetation along Coral Creek will remain undisturbed and an environmental buffer zone beyond the riparian vegetation is to remain undisturbed by the project. The area of ERE in the southern section of the project area (RE11.9.4) is expected to remain undisturbed by the project.

Potential offsite impacts of the project will be managed through the appropriate State Government regulatory channels. This will include identifying and managing all potential off site impacts and designing the appropriate control strategies through the EIS, EMOS and Plans of Operations.

4.2 Indicate if your action is:

(a) a nuclear action; or
(b) will be taken by the Commonwealth or by a Commonwealth agency; or
(c) will be taken in a Commonwealth marine area; or
(d) will be taken on Commonwealth land.

If your action falls into one of these categories, provide details about the impact of your action on the environment generally (ie, in addition to the specific matters addressed above in 4.1).

The action proposed is not a nuclear action, it is not expected to be taken by the Commonwealth or any Commonwealth agencies and it is not in or within the vicinity of a Commonwealth marine area or Commonwealth land.

The project will include clearing of some existing remnant vegetation for the mining pit, overburden dumps, access roads and mine infrastructure, including approximately 58 hectares of remnant vegetation classified as ERE which is predominantly regrowth. Clearing will be restricted to the areas necessary for the development of the mine, no unnecessary clearing will occur.

5. Measures aimed at avoiding or reducing significant impacts on matters protected under the EPBC Act

5.1 Describe any specific measures proposed as part of the action to avoid or lessen significant impacts on matters protected under the EPBC Act. Include a timeframe or workplan for implementation of any relevant measures.

Examples of relevant measures may include the timing of works to avoid critical periods for listed species, avoidance of habitat important for listed species from direct and indirect impacts, application of specific design measures to avoid or reduce impacts, or adoption of specific work practices to reduce or avoid impacts (see Referral Guide, Fact Sheet and 'Particular Manner' Guideline at http://www.deh.gov.au/epbc).

Due to the current land use and the extent of previous clearing activities, it is not expected that the nature of the project will have a significant impact on matters protected by the EPBC Act. However, a number of strategies will be developed and implemented for the operation to ensure that any potential impact to the surrounding environment is minimised.

During the development and operational phases of the project, activities will involve clearing vegetation, (including approximately 58 hectares of ERE) and stripping topsoil from all areas of disturbance. Clearing will be controlled by detailed mine planning and kept to a minimum only involving areas necessary for development. Cleared vegetation will be stockpiled and burnt under permit or used in the rehabilitation process as habitats for local fauna.

Topsoil identified as suitable will be stripped from all areas of disturbance and stockpiled for use in the rehabilitation process. Topsoil will be managed under a site specific Topsoil Management Plan. Management will include direct placement on rehabilitation or stockpiling for later use. Topsoil stockpiles will be designed, placed and managed to protect the structural and biological integrity of the soil.

Areas of rehabilitation will be prepared by reprofiling to designs suitable for the area, placing of topsoil to a predetermined depth and revegetation methods which may include mulching, seeding, planting of tube stock, fertilizing and soil conditioning. The rehabilitation and post mining land use proposals for the mined areas can be tailored to support vegetation and water sources which is valuable to migratory species and their habitats.

A comprehensive water management system will be designed for the project to prevent any discharges of sediment laden water to the surrounding areas. Water from all areas of disturbance will be directed to sediment dams and stored or used in the management of dust and coal processing. Sediment dams will be designed using appropriate guidelines.

Hazardous materials will be managed in accordance with the site Safety Management System as required by the Queensland Coal Mining Safety legislation. The storage of hazardous materials will be in accordance with Australian Standards and environmentally acceptable practices. Hazardous wastes from equipment operation and maintenance practices will be appropriately stored and removed from site by authorised waste transport contractors.

Noise prediction modelling conducted for the project indicates that impacts to the nearest sensitive receptors will be within statutory criteria with the implementation of reasonable practical mitigation measures. The control of noise will include the use of equipment with effective muffler systems and regular servicing of the equipment to maintain it in good working order. Where necessary, noise barriers will also be installed to prevent the impact on any environmentally sensitive locations.

Air quality modelling indicated that no adverse off-site dust impacts are expected at the nearest potentially affected sensitive receptors. Satisfactory annual concentration impacts for both PM10 and TSP were noted. Deposition impacts are also expected to be within the adopted EPA air quality guideline. Air quality will be managed through the use and regular maintenance of equipment with effective exhaust systems. Dust generated by vehicles will be managed through the regular watering of haul roads, coal stockpile areas and trafficked areas. Clearing activities will be restricted to minimise the area exposed to wind erosion. Where necessary dust barriers will be installed to manage the impacts of dust off site.

Cultural heritage matters will be managed in consultation with the Aboriginal party for the area. This will include conducting surveys and designing and implementing systems for the protection and management of all items of cultural heritage significance. The Aboriginal party will be consulted on a regular basis and involved in all aspects of cultural heritage management for the site.

An extensive community consultation program will be implemented for the EIS process and throughout the life of the operation. This program will seek to ensure that the community is informed and updated on a regular basis to ensure an understanding and a sense of ownership in relation to the project.

Due to the current level of mining activity in the Collinsville area, it is expected that the project will have a beneficial impact on the local economy. The project will support industries such as hospitality, trades, local service providers and community events and organisations. The project will also boost the community in providing employment opportunities.

Many of the environmental management procedures will be developed and expanded throughout the life of the project within the principles of continuous improvement. The use of specific practices will be detailed in the Plans of Operations which will be regularly submitted to the Queensland EPA.

An environmental monitoring regime will be designed and implemented to monitor the progress and effects of the operation, ensure compliance with environmental authority conditions and facilitate the continuous improvement process. Monitoring will include on site water quality, upstream and downstream surface water, groundwater, dust, noise and rehabilitation. The monitoring regime for the project will vary depending on seasonal factors, the significance and sensitivity of issues to the local community and the EPA.

6. Information sources

6.1 List relevant references

You should also attach a copy of any relevant reports or documents that support the arguments and conclusions made in this referral. For example, any flora and fauna surveys or desktop investigations should be provided.

6.2 For information given in sections 3 and 4 of this referral, please indicate:

(a) the source of the information; and

(b) how recent the information is; and

(c) how the reliability of the information was tested; and

(d) any uncertainties in the information.

- Department of Environment & Heritage EPBC Act Protected Matters Report, 15 September 2004.
  This information is regarded as reliable but there may be some uncertainties in the information in relation to the relatively small project area.
- Queensland Environmental Protection Agency Regional Ecosystem website, 22 September 2004.
  This information is regarded as reliable but there may be some uncertainties in the information in relation to the specific area covered by the project.
- Queensland Environmental Protection Agency Ecomaps, January 2004.
  This information is regarded as reliable but there are uncertainties due to the scale of the mapping and it's reliability on the DNRME Vegetation Management Act mapping.
- Queensland Department of Natural Resources Mines & Energy Regional Ecosystem mapping, 2004.
  This information is regarded as reliable but there are uncertainties due to the scale of the mapping.
- Sonoma Coal Project Flora and Fauna Survey, October 2004.
  This information is regarded as reliable with no uncertainties.
- Sonoma Coal Project Air and Noise Study, October 2004.
  This information is regarded as reliable with little or no uncertainties.
- Belmore Project Pipeline Deposit Environmental Management Overview Strategy, December 1999.
  This information is regarded as reliable due to the similarities between the two areas and the close proximity of the project to the proposal.
- Sonoma Coal Project Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment Study, August 2004.
  This information is regarded as reliable with little or no uncertainties.

7. Signatures and Declarations

Section 489 of the EPBC Act states that the provision of false or misleading information is an offence punishable on conviction by imprisonment and fine.

7.1. Signature of person making the referral

I, Megan McCollum, declare that the information contained in this form is, to my knowledge, true and not misleading.

Signature

Date

7.2. Signature of person proposing to take the action

I, Christopher Wallin, declare that the information contained in this form is, to my knowledge, true and not misleading.

Signature

Date

7.3. Declaration of person nominated as proponent in Section 1.3, if different from person proposing to take the action

I, …….*(full name*), being (or agent acting on behalf of) the person nominated in Section 1.3 of this referral form as the nominated proponent agree to be designated as the proponent for the action described above if it is decided that the action requires approval under Part 9 of the EPBC Act.

Signature

Date

Signature of person proposing to take the action

Date

Fill in Section 7.4 if you believe that the proposal is not likely to have a significant impact on matters protected by the EPBC Act and that the proposal is therefore not a controlled action. Fill in Section 7.5 if you believe that the proposal is likely to have a significant impact on a protected matter and that the proposal is therefore a controlled action. (Note: This Section must be completed in *all cases* except where the referral is made by a State or Territory or a Commonwealth agency in relation to an action to be taken by another person.)

7.4. ***If you think your proposed action is not likely to have a significant impact on any of the matters listed in the table below, then you should select and complete the following statement and you should not mark any of the boxes in the table below.***

I Megan McCollum, being the person making this referral and the person proposing to take the action (or agent acting on behalf of the person) believe that the action described in this referral **is not a controlled action.**

Briefly provide reasons why you believe your proposed action is not a controlled action:
(Note: For an explanation of the term "controlled action", see the Referral Guide.)

The proposed action will not have a significant impact on the nominated matters of National Environmental Significance.

There are no World Heritage properties, National Heritage places or Ramsar wetlands of international importance within the boundaries or nearby to the project. The project does not impact on any Commonwealth marine environments and does not involve any nuclear actions.

Any impact on listed migratory species will be minimal due to the lack of existing suitable habitats, the extent of the existing disturbance and the vicinity of existing mining operations in the region.

Impacts to threatened fauna and flora identified on site will not be significant, as the key remnant habitats for such species are associated with the Coral Creek Riparian zone which will not be directly impacted by the proposed action.

Clearing of approximately 58 hectares of Remnant Endangered Regional Ecosystems of which most is regrowth will not have significant impacts on matters protected by the EPBC due to the small size of the ERE's, see Figure 4 and Table 1. All RE's represented by the Regional Ecosystems identified on site, with the exception of RE11.9.4, are represented in protected areas within 150km of the project site. RE11.9.4 is represented in a small remnant stand (18Ha's) well outside the projected areas of disturbance that will result from the proposed action.

OR

7.5. ***If you think that your proposed action is likely to have a significant impact on any of the matters listed in the table below, then you should select and complete the following statement. You must then mark 'Yes' against those matters on which you think it will have a significant impact, in the table below.***

I …….*(full name*), being the person making this referral and the person proposing to take the action (or agent acting on behalf of the person) believe that the action described in this referral **is a controlled action because of the following provisions of the Act**:

Significant Impact Likely	Controlling Provision
	World Heritage property (Sections 12 and 15A - significant impacts on the values of a World Heritage property)
	Ramsar Wetland (Sections 16 and 17B - significant impacts on the ecological character of a Ramsar wetland)
	Threatened species or ecological communities (Section 18 and Section 18A - significant impacts on a listed threatened species or a listed threatened ecological community)
	Migratory species (Sections 20 and 20A - significant impacts on a listed migratory species)
	Nuclear action (Sections 21 and 22A - nuclear actions)
	Commonwealth marine area (Sections 23, 24 and 24A - actions relating to the Commonwealth marine area and fishing in coastal waters managed by the Commonwealth)
	Commonwealth land (Sections 26 and 27A - actions relating to Commonwealth land)
	Commonwealth action (Section 28 - actions by the Commonwealth having a significant impact on the environment)

Briefly provide reasons why you believe your proposed action is a controlled action:
(Note: For an explanation of the term "controlled action", see the Referral Guide.)

If the person making this referral is, or is representing, a *small business* (a business having fewer than 20 employees), please provide an estimate of the time taken to complete this form.

Please Include

- The time spent reading the instructions, working on the questions and obtaining the information; and
- The time spent by all employees in collecting and providing this information.

hours minutes

END OF FORM