



new acland transport corridor case study

New Acland Transport Corridor Environmental Assessment

November 2006 – March 2007

New Acland Mine had been identified as a potential new coal supply for the Tarong and Tarong North Power Stations. The Tarong Transport Alliance appointed frc environmental to investigate the aquatic environmental impacts of the preferred alignments and mode of transport (rail or conveyor).

Project requirements overview

Tarong Transport Alliance required **frc environmental** to complete a specialist aquatic ecology assessment of the proposed alignments.

Careful consideration of aquatic issues was required as the transport corridor spanned multiple catchments and river basins, meaning that any adverse impacts on aquatic ecology could have wide-reaching effects.

frc environmental was commissioned to investigate how the aquatic ecology of the waterways crossed by the rail or pipeline alignment, and waters upstream and downstream, could potentially be impacted by the proposed Project.

As the transport corridor crossed through numerous private properties, it was important that specialist consultants were able to complete field surveys as efficiently as possible and had a demonstrated track record in courteous and professional liaison with landowners.



Senior ecologist undertaking the helicopter reconnaissance of the affected waterways to select the optimal survey sites

Project Performance

- Use of innovative field techniques such as an aerial reconnaissance saved time and money
- A flexible, professional and courteous approach to field work timing and private property access ensured the study was completed on-time and to the highest possible standard
- Our knowledge of the ecology of ephemeral and intermittent streams in the region enabled us to intelligently assess the likely impacts of the project
- Effective liaison with Tarong Transport Alliance team members ensured that we contributed insight and clarity to the assessment team

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Aerial view of the Tarong Power Station



Senior ecologist completing a habitat assessment of a dry creek on the Tarong Mine site

Our tailored approach and methodology

frc environmental conducted an assessment based on a thorough desktop review, field survey of aquatic habitat, water quality, aquatic flora and fauna, and environmental values of the affected creeks, ensuring rigour and strategic value. This assessment also included investigating the potential impacts of the Project to aquatic ecology, and proposed measures to avoid, minimise or mitigate these impacts.

In response to the needs of the client, **frc environmental** developed a cost-effective approach to field surveys of the transport corridor. We completed a low-level helicopter fly-over to select appropriate survey sites that represented the range of aquatic habitat likely to be impacted. This not only saved the client a substantial amount of time and money; it also minimised the private property access required.

Each of the waterways were surveyed by experienced field staff, who when required, were able to quickly develop a rapport with local landowners so that surveys could be completed to schedule without incident.

Physical habitat was described in accordance with AusRivAS and State of the Rivers protocols, and included survey and identification of aquatic macrophytes and description of riparian cover and water quality. Under all the required and relevant permits, aquatic fauna were captured, identified and released using a combination of baited traps, dip nets, seine nets and set nets. Macroinvertebrates were sampled in strict accordance with Queensland AusRivAS protocols, and sorted and identified in our purpose-built laboratory by AusRivAS-accredited ecologists.

A sound appreciation of the ecology of ephemeral and intermittent waterways, and our in-depth knowledge of the aquatic ecology of the region enabled us to provide a robust and defensible assessment.

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