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# Woodsreef Mine Major Rehabilitation Project

## Health Impact Assessment 1

### Pre-Remediation

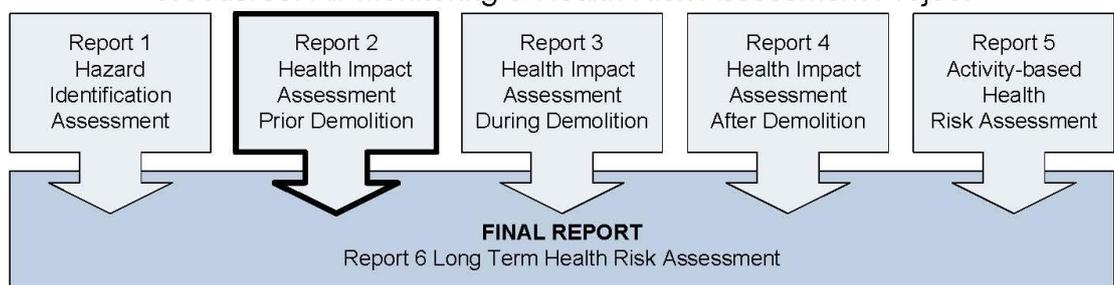
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14 September 2015

NSW Department of Industry  
516 High Street  
Maitland NSW 2320

Version: Revision 1

#### Woodsreef Air Monitoring & Health Risk Assessment Project



# Woodsreef Mine Major Rehabilitation Project

## Health Impact Assessment 1

### Pre-Remediation

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## Executive Summary

NSW Department of Industry engaged SLR Consulting Australia Pty Ltd (SLR) to undertake a series of Health Impact Assessments of the Woodsreef Mine site as part of the Woodsreef Mine Major Rehabilitation Project. This report is the first and preliminary component of the task.

Woodsreef Mine is a derelict, open cut asbestos mine located approximately 15km north east of Barraba in the Northern NSW Tablelands. The former mine extends over an area of about 290 hectares, comprising predominantly Crown land.

Woodsreef Mine is situated in an area where naturally occurring asbestos is found in significant concentrations over a broad area both inside and outside the mine site. Thus the local environment may be impacted by both the effects of previous mining operations as well as areas of naturally occurring asbestos being subject to natural weathering of the parent material potentially leading to the enrichment of local soils with asbestos fibres.

Open cut mining for chrysotile asbestos first occurred at Woodsreef between 1918 and 1923. The Chrysotile Corporation of Australia carried out large scale mining between 1973 and 1983. The mine closed in 1983 due to high production costs and is now considered a derelict mine.

The Woodsreef mine site includes a waste rock dump, a tailings dump and a number of open pits, some containing considerable quantities of water. There are also a number of derelict buildings. Asbestos fibres are present throughout the site.

The Woodsreef Mine Major Rehabilitation Project (works project) broadly consists of demolition of building structures as well as friable and bonded asbestos removal works, including demolition of the existing derelict buildings and remaining infrastructure. A series of Health Impact Assessments are to be conducted prior, during and post works.

The overall objectives of the Health Impact Assessments are to determine the public health implications for communities surrounding the mine and to members of the public who access areas adjacent to the mine site, from potential asbestos exposure arising from the abandoned mine site, during the works project.

The specific conditions of this Health Impact Assessment Report relate to the mine prior to the commencement of the demolition works project and people conducting activities that are regularly undertaken near the mine and people living near the mine. Air dispersion modelling tools have been used to identify the most probable exposure vectors and as a guide to the selection of most appropriate locations to undertake monitoring for airborne asbestos fibres.

The local communities closest to the Woodsreef mine are Barraba, with a population of approximately 1,150 people, located around 15km from the mine, and Woodsreef and its surrounds with a scattered population of around 134 people (2011 Census). The area in the immediate vicinity of the Woodsreef mine is rural in nature with scattered houses generally on farmland. The main population centre nearest the mine is the township of Barraba.

There is also a “community” of transient recreational users who use the area near the mine. Some of these people will be local residents and some will be residents from outside the local area, visiting the area for sightseeing or recreational purposes.

Inhalation of asbestos fibres is a potential health risk, leading to a number of lung disorders, including lung cancer and mesothelioma. The likelihood of disease arising from exposure to asbestos depends on the cumulative exposure over a lifetime. Factors that add up to the lifetime exposure include frequency of exposure, concentration of airborne asbestos during each exposure and length of exposure. Put simply a short isolated exposure is unlikely to cause disease but long term heavy exposure such as occurred historically in some occupations, was likely to lead to asbestos related diseases in those exposed.

Airborne asbestos fibre monitoring in the vicinity of the mine has been undertaken a number of times from 1992 and 2014. Monitoring occurred either off mine site as background monitoring or on the mine site as part of monitoring during site works either during remediation works.

All air monitoring records indicated that asbestos fibres were only becoming airborne at detectable concentrations when there is a physical disturbance on the mine site itself.

Furthermore detectable concentrations of airborne asbestos fibres have not been recorded outside the mine site in the surrounding communities and locations.

The majority of the monitoring from 1992 to 2014 indicated that airborne asbestos fibre concentrations were at levels less than 0.01 fibres per mL of air. That is concentrations were below the detection limit of the monitoring method. Therefore the likely concentrations of airborne asbestos were at least ten times lower than the current occupational exposure limit of Safework Australia which was 0.1 fibres per mL of air.

A number of exceptions have occurred during three periods, each time during remediation works on the mine site and at monitoring locations on the mine site. Airborne asbestos fibre concentrations above 0.01 fibres per mL air, that is the detection limit of the method, have only been recorded during three periods, 1992 (0.04 fibres per mL, sample numbers unknown), 2006 (1 sample, 0.06 fibres per mL) and 2012 (1 sample, 0.04 fibres per mL). These occurred when remediation activities have been occurring on the mine site and only at sampling locations on the mine site itself. The indicative approximation of samples above the detection limit is 1 sample above the detection limit per 140 samples taken on the mine site.

As part of the current study both background air monitoring and activity based monitoring was undertaken to help understand the conditions on and around the mine site prior to the contemporary site rehabilitation and demolition activities. Background airborne asbestos monitoring was conducted in the vicinity of the mine, in Barraba and at a control site at Tamworth. The monitoring indicated all locations monitored were similar with no difference in background airborne asbestos fibre concentrations between Tamworth, Barraba and locations in the vicinity of the mine. The airborne asbestos fibre concentrations were at levels less than 0.01 fibres per mL of air at all locations.

Activity based monitoring undertaken with SLR personnel wearing personal asbestos monitoring equipment while simulating typical recreational activities including Fossicking, Camping, Picnicking, Bird Watching, Walking the Flora Trail, Viewing the mine and Walking along the Bundarra – Barraba Road. Results of the Activity Based Monitoring for all activities indicated that airborne asbestos fibre concentrations were at levels less than 0.01 fibres per mL of air. As stated above this concentration is at least ten times lower than the Safework Australia exposure standard of 0.1 fibres per mL of air.

Therefore airborne asbestos fibre concentrations above 0.01 fibres per mL of air have only been recorded at sampling locations on the mine site itself and only when remediation activities have been occurring on the mine site. This data fits the assumption that asbestos fibres mainly become airborne during intermittent physical disturbance to the asbestos containing source material. Examples of physical disturbance may be caused by natural forces of erosion or manmade disturbance through remediation works, driving along the now closed section of The Mine Road (formerly known as Crow Mountain Road), or recreational activities that disturb asbestos contaminated soils.

The release of airborne asbestos during these short term disturbances of asbestos contaminated soils, either on the mine site or off the mine site, will occur. However the extent of this release of asbestos is difficult to measure given the intermittent nature of the disturbances and the patchy distribution of asbestos in soils. The current site containment and restrictions to access to the mine site and The Mine Road are designed to minimise potential disturbance activities.

To classify potential public health risk for local communities and other members of the public, a qualitative method was used based on the risk factors considered to influence the likelihood of asbestos exposure to persons and communities. These factors included the following:

- Proximity of Exposure Groups to the mine
- Historic airborne asbestos fibre concentrations recorded at locations near Exposure Groups
- Possibility for airborne asbestos fibre concentrations exceeding 0.01 fibres/mL air during short term disturbances (due to either natural or man-made forces) of asbestos contaminated soils at locations near Exposure Groups
- Likelihood of Exposure Group being near mine site during short term disturbances of potentially asbestos contaminated soils by forces of nature
- Likelihood of Exposure Group creating short term disturbances of potentially asbestos contaminated soils near the mine
- Frequency of visits to mine site vicinity
- Time spent near mine vicinity during each visit

The Exposure Risks and hence public health implications for communities adjacent to the mine and to members of the public who access areas adjacent to the site, from potential asbestos exposure arising from the abandoned mine site, during the works project have been set out below in Table 1.

**Table 1 Community Exposure Groupings – Estimated Exposure Risks from Airborne Asbestos Fibres Associated with the Woodsreef Mine and Surrounds**

<b>Exposure Group</b>	<b>Estimated Exposure Risk from Airborne Asbestos Fibres</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>Barraba Residents</b>	Negligible	Health risk is very low given the combination of all known factors described above
<b>Rural Residents 5 km to 13 km from Mine</b>	Negligible	
<b>Tamworth – Control Group</b>	Negligible	
<b>Woodsreef Residents</b>	Negligible to Low	Health risk is very low to low, but clearly possible given the expected combination of factors described above
<b>Passive Recreation within 5 km of Mine</b>	Negligible to Low	
<b>Active Recreation within 5 km of Mine</b>	Negligible to Low	

## Table of Contents

1	GLOSSARY	10
2	INTRODUCTION	11
2.1	Introduction	11
2.2	Background	11
2.2.1	Naturally Occurring Asbestos	11
2.2.2	Woodsreef Deposit and Mine	12
2.3	Details of Local Communities	19
2.3.1	Community Demographic	21
2.3.2	Community Socio-Economic Status	24
2.3.3	Community Health Data	24
2.3.4	Special Populations	25
2.3.5	Transient Populations	25
2.3.6	Transport Routes Near Woodsreef Mine	25
3	RISK ASSESSMENT	27
3.1	Introduction	27
3.1.1	What is Risk Assessment	27
3.1.2	Risk Assessment Approach	27
3.2	Objectives	27
3.3	Issue Identification	28
3.3.1	Naturally Occurring Asbestos	28
3.3.2	Woodsreef Mine	28
3.3.3	Key Points – Woodsreef Mine	29
3.3.4	Community Chosen for Assessment	30
3.3.5	Recreational Activities Undertaken Near Woodsreef Mine	30
3.3.6	Key Points - Community & Recreation	31
3.3.7	Asbestos & Land	31
3.3.8	Key Points - Asbestos & Land	35
3.3.9	Asbestos & Water	35
3.3.10	Key Points – Asbestos & Water	36
3.3.11	Asbestos & Air Quality	37
3.3.12	Air Dispersion Modelling	38
3.3.13	Summary of Methodology	38
3.3.14	Dispersion Modelling Approach	38
3.3.15	Variable Emission Rate	38
3.3.16	Meteorology	39
3.3.17	Receptors	41
3.3.18	Results	42

## Table of Contents

3.3.19	Air Monitoring Locations	48
3.3.20	Contemporary Airborne Asbestos Fibre Monitoring	49
3.3.21	Historic Airborne Asbestos Fibre Monitoring	52
3.3.22	Key Points – Asbestos & Air Quality	56
3.4	Issue Identification Summary	57
3.5	Toxicity Assessment	59
3.5.1	Summary of Diseases	59
3.6	Exposure Assessment	61
3.6.1	Exposure Pathways and Receptors	61
3.6.2	Assessment of Exposure Concentrations	64
3.7	Exposure Assessment Summary	66
4	RISK CHARACTERISATION	67
4.1	Risk Characterisation Summary	70
5	CONCLUSIONS	72
6	REFERENCES	73

### TABLES

Table 1	Community Exposure Groupings – Estimated Exposure Risks from Airborne Asbestos Fibres Associated with the Woodsreef Mine and Surrounds	6
Table 2	Approximate Student Enrolments in Schools Located in the Barraba Township	25
Table 3	Estimated Ranges of Asbestos Concentrations in < 2mm Particle Size Fraction of Samples (% vol/vol)	34
Table 4	Bureau of Meteorology Monitoring Data used in the TAPM Modelling	39
Table 5	Discrete Receptor Locations	41
Table 6	Recommended Ranked Monitoring Locations (by Season)	48
Table 7	Air Monitoring Locations	49
Table 8	Air Monitoring Locations	50
Table 9	Activity Based Airborne Asbestos Fibre Monitoring 2014	52
Table 10	Historic Airborne Asbestos Fibre Monitoring 1992 to 2013	54
Table 11	Community Exposure Groupings – Receptors	62
Table 12	Community Exposure Groupings –Estimated Background Exposure Concentrations (no disturbance on mine)	65
Table 13	Examples of everyday risks in Australia	67
Table 14	Definitions of Risk Ratings	69
Table 15	Community Exposure Groupings – Receptors and Estimated Exposure Risks	71
Table 16	Mesothelioma Risks in Occupational Groups in Australia	C3

## Table of Contents

### FIGURES

Figure 1	Woodsreef Mine Location	12
Figure 2	Woodsreef Mine Location in Relation to Barraba	12
Figure 3	Woodsreef Asbestos Mine Site Plan	13
Figure 4	Barraba Mean Monthly Rainfall 1881-2014	15
Figure 5	Barraba Monthly Mean Maximum Temperatures 1966-2013	16
Figure 6	Barraba Monthly Mean Minimum Temperatures 1966-2013	17
Figure 7	Natural Topography of Area Surrounding Woodsreef Asbestos Mine	18
Figure 8	Barraba Suburb Area and Location of Woodsreef Asbestos Mine	19
Figure 9	Woodsreef Suburb Area and Location of Woodsreef Asbestos Mine	20
Figure 10	Barraba Urban Population by Age, 2011	21
Figure 11	Barraba Urban Population of Males by Age, 2011	21
Figure 12	Barraba Urban Population of Females by Age, 2011	22
Figure 13	Woodsreef Population by Age, 2011	22
Figure 14	Woodsreef Population of Males by Age, 2011	23
Figure 15	Woodsreef Population of Females by Age, 2011	23
Figure 16	Comparison of Barraba Observations and Barraba CALMET Predictions 2001-2012	40
Figure 17	Predicted Exposure Potential - Annual Average 2001 to 2012	43
Figure 18	Predicted Exposure Potential – Spring 2001 to 2012	44
Figure 19	Predicted Exposure Potential – Summer 2001 to 2012	45
Figure 20	Predicted Exposure Potential – Autumn 2001 to 2012	46
Figure 21	Predicted Exposure Potential – Winter 2001 to 2012	47

### APPENDICES

Appendix A	Scope of a Health Impact Assessment
Appendix B	SLR Air Monitoring Reports
Appendix C	Asbestos Toxicity, Disease and Historic Occupational Exposures
Appendix D	Uncertainties and Limitations
Appendix E	Ongoing Management Monitoring and Evaluation

## 1 GLOSSARY

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACGIH	American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists
ATSDR	Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry
F/mL	Fibres per millilitre
F/mL/year	Fibres per millilitre per year
g/s/m <sup>2</sup>	Grams per second per square metre
IARC	International Agency for Research on Cancer
km	kilometre
m	metre
m <sup>2</sup>	square metre
mL	millilitre
µm	micrometre, one millionth of a metre
NATA	National Association of Testing Authorities
NOA	naturally occurring asbestos
NOHSC	National Occupational Health and Safety Commission
NSW	New South Wales
PCM	Phase contrast microscopy
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
TWA	Time weighted average
US EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency

## **2 INTRODUCTION**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The NSW Department of Industry engaged SLR Consulting Australia Pty Ltd (SLR) to undertake a series of Health Impact Assessments of the Woodsreef Mine site as part of the Woodsreef Mine Major Rehabilitation Project.

The Woodsreef Mine is a derelict open cut asbestos mine located approximately 15km north east of Barraba in the Northern NSW Tablelands. The former mine extends over an area of about 290 hectares, comprising predominantly Crown land.

Open cut mining for chrysotile asbestos first occurred at Woodsreef between 1918 and 1923. The Chrysotile Corporation of Australia carried out large scale mining between 1973 and 1983. The mine closed in 1983 due to high production costs and is now considered a derelict mine.

Woodsreef Mine includes a waste rock dump, a tailings dump, both of which are uncapped, and a number of open pits, some containing considerable quantities of water, there are also a number of derelict buildings. These are all substantially unrehabilitated and uncontained asbestos fibres are found throughout the site. An amount of exposed processed asbestos, together with dilapidated structures and facilities used in the processing of this material, still remain at the site.

The project, known as the “Woodsreef Mine Major Rehabilitation Project”, broadly consists of a series of demolition and friable and bonded asbestos removal works, including demolition of the existing mill building, office building, product silos and remaining infrastructure.

The overall objectives of the Health Impact Assessments were to determine the public health implications from potential asbestos exposure arising from the abandoned mine site, during and following completion of the proposed demolition/remedial works, in adjacent communities and to members of the public through intermittent access to areas adjacent to the site.

The outcomes of the assessment were expected to guide priorities and activities that were required to most effectively manage and mitigate exposure to the community.

This report presents the methodology and findings of the Health Impact Assessment completed for the Woodsreef Mine Major Rehabilitation Project (Pre-Remediation) undertaken by SLR Consulting on behalf of the NSW Department of Industry.

The specific conditions of this Health Impact Assessment are the mine in its current condition (pre-remediation), those activities regularly undertaken in proximity to and residing near the mine.

The Health Impact Assessment was conducted as per the recommendations contained in enHealth (2001) and the framework set out in Appendix A.

### **2.2 Background**

#### **2.2.1 Naturally Occurring Asbestos**

Asbestos is the name given to a group of six different fibrous minerals (amosite, chrysotile, crocidolite, and the fibrous varieties of tremolite, actinolite, and anthophyllite) that occur naturally in the environment. One of these, namely chrysotile, belongs to the serpentine family of minerals, while all of the others belong to the amphibole family (ATSDR, 2001). Asbestos can be found in a fibrous asbestiform or crystalline state.

Naturally occurring asbestos (NOA) is present in many areas of eastern Australia. It has been estimated that potential asbestos containing rock accounts for approximately 0.2% of the land area of eastern New South Wales, however most deposits are small and commercial scale deposits rare (Hendrickx, 2009).

## 2.2.2 Woodsreef Deposit and Mine

The size and composition of the Woodsreef deposit was described by Dames & Moore (1997) as the following:

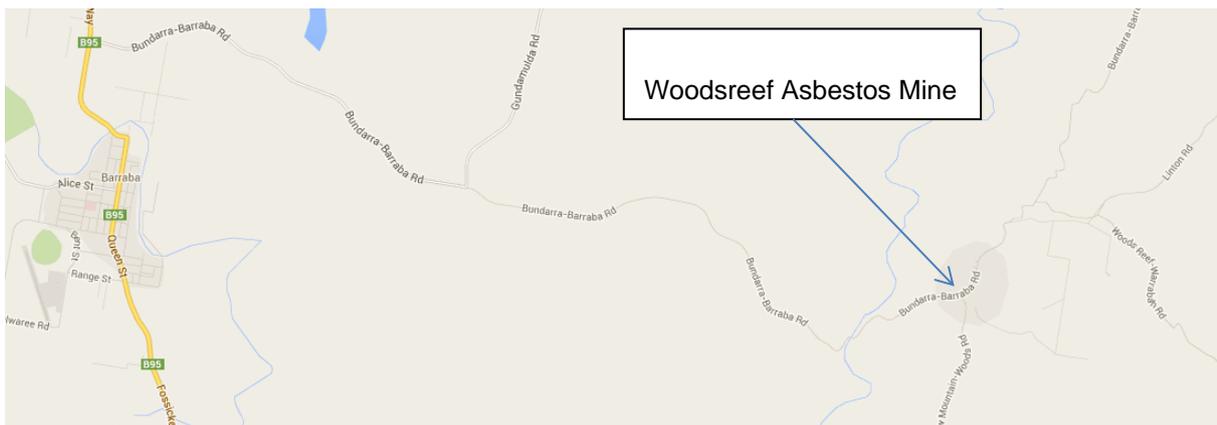
*“The Woodsreef deposit is developed in a massive pod of the Great Serpentine Belt, which is approximately 8 km long and 2 km wide (Brown, et al, 1992). The mineral at Woodsreef occurs as cross fibre to chemically identical host serpentine. The reserve approximates 12.1 million tonnes of proven ore (Brown, et al, 1992). The reserve is only medium in grade averaging 4% (Brown, et al, 1992).”*

The Woodsreef Mine site is situated at the locality of Woodsreef, 15km from Barraba on the Bundarra – Barraba Road (NSW Department of Primary Industries Soil Conservation Service, 2013). The mine is situated where The Mine Road (formerly known as Crow Mountain Road) joins the Bundarra – Barraba Road (See Figure 1, Figure 2 & Figure 3).

**Figure 1 Woodsreef Mine Location**



**Figure 2 Woodsreef Mine Location in Relation to Barraba**





## Site History

The Woodsreef site has been actively mined for asbestos during three periods. The first from 1919 to 1923 produced 2,500 tonnes of asbestos. After a long hiatus, the second mining period started in 1970 and ceased in 1973. The third and final period of mining commenced in 1975 and continued until 1983. From 1972 to 1983 approximately 550,000 tonnes of chrysotile was produced from 100 million tonnes of mined material (*Dames & Moore, 1997; NSW Department of Primary Industries Soil Conservation Service, 2013*). The mine has remained derelict since 1983.

The scale of total asbestos production at Woodsreef, of 552,500 tonnes, dwarfed all other asbestos mines in Australia. The Woodsreef mine accounted for approximately 73% of the total asbestos production in Australia (*Hendrickx, 2009*). Based on the estimates of world production by Virta (2006) the Woodsreef asbestos production equated to approximately 0.3% of the total world production of asbestos up until 2003. In contrast the next largest Australian asbestos production occurred at the now infamous Wittenoom mine in Western Australia which produced 152,466 tonnes of crocidolite asbestos between 1937 and 1966 (*Gibbons, 2000*).

## Current Status

The mine site is approximately 290 hectares in size and is reported to contain a 75 million tonne waste rock dump and 25 million tonne tailings dump. The site also contains two derelict buildings and four open pits (*Parsons Brinckerhoff, 2012 & NSW Department of Primary Industries Soil Conservation Service, 2013*).

The mine site can be functionally divided into the following areas: Open Pits (four on site), Mill Building Area, Waste Dump (three sites, south, west and northeast), and a Tailings Dump. The Mine Road winds along the eastern perimeter of the mine except for a section of road that runs in-between the South Waste Dump and the Tailings Dump (See Figure 3 above).

The Mill Building was slated for demolition in 2014. It was proposed that a Containment Cell be dug to the west of the Mill Building. The building was to be demolished and buried in the Containment Cell.

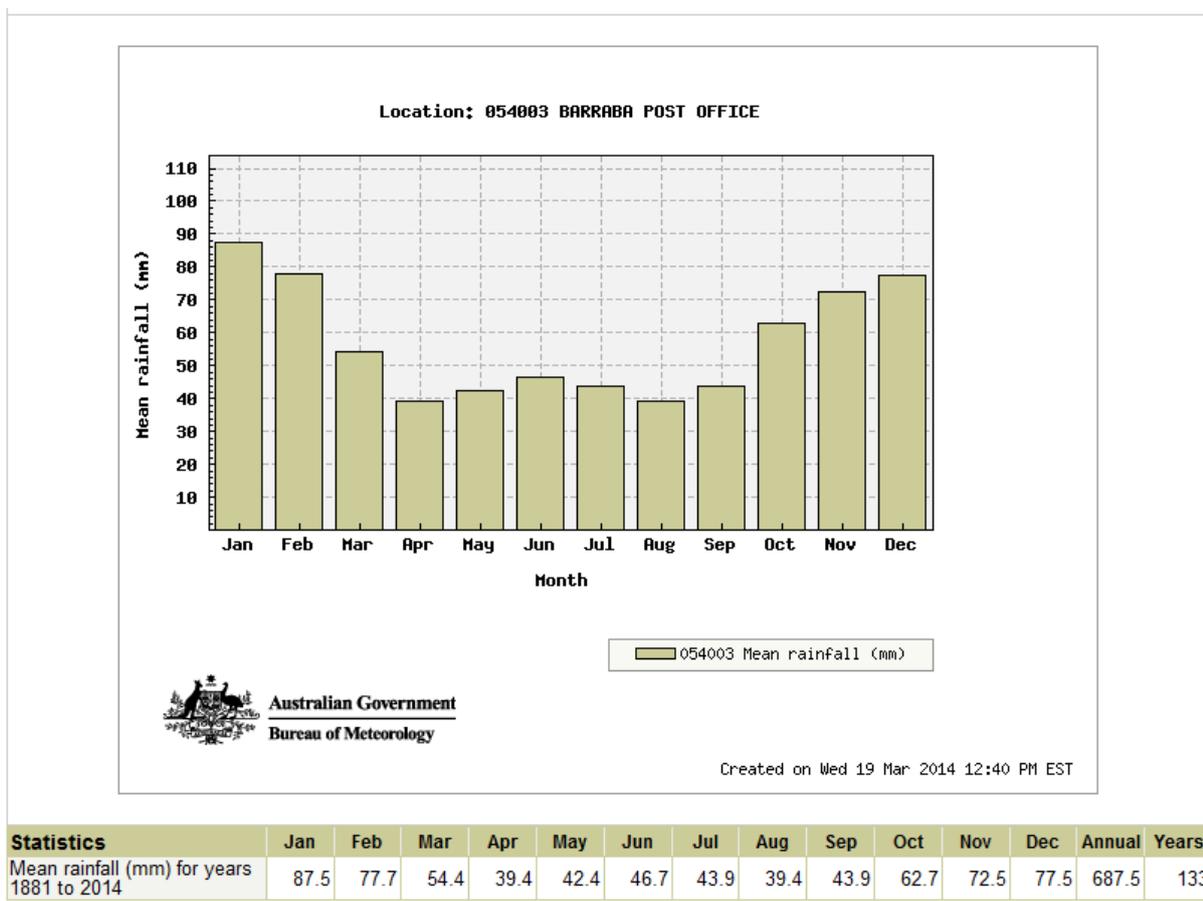
The Waste Dumps consist of processed rocks and overburden. The Tailings have been reported as partially processed ore, understood to be predominately asbestos, stockpiled for later reprocessing that never occurred (*NSW Department of Primary Industries Soil Conservation Service, 2013*).

## Site Climate

The climatic conditions at Barraba will be broadly similar to the climate at Woodsreef mine. Furthermore of the Bureau of Meteorology weather stations operating in the region near Woodsreef Mine, the weather station with the most extensive climate data is the Barraba Post Office (Weather Station Number: 054003 Opened: 1881 Status: Open Latitude 30.38°S, Longitude 150.61°E Elevation: 500m).

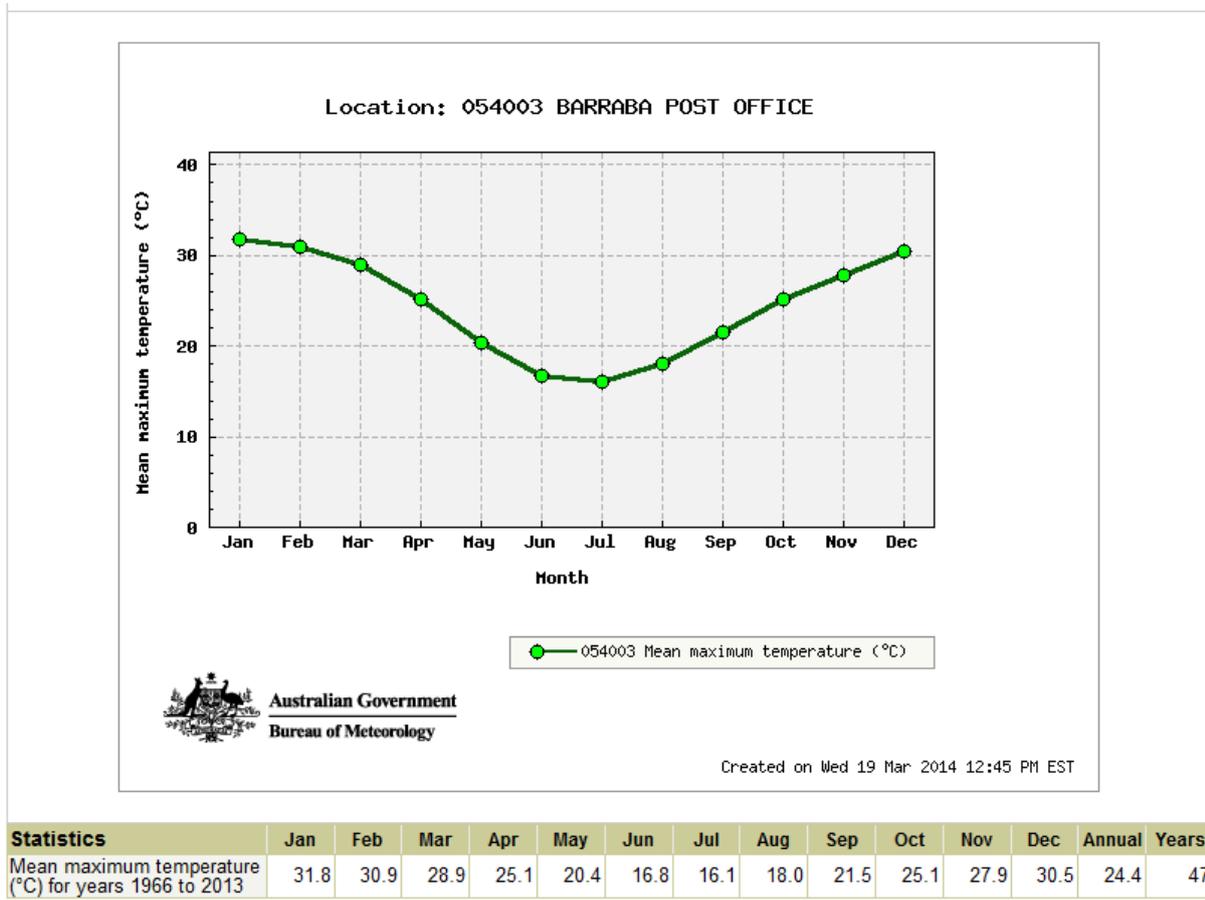
Records of rainfall at Barraba indicated the mean annual rainfall to be 687.5 mm, with the heaviest rainfall usually occurred in October to March. Monthly mean rainfall has been set out below in Figure 4. Monthly mean maximum and minimum temperatures have been set out below in Figure 5 and Figure 6 .

**Figure 4 Barraba Mean Monthly Rainfall 1881-2014**



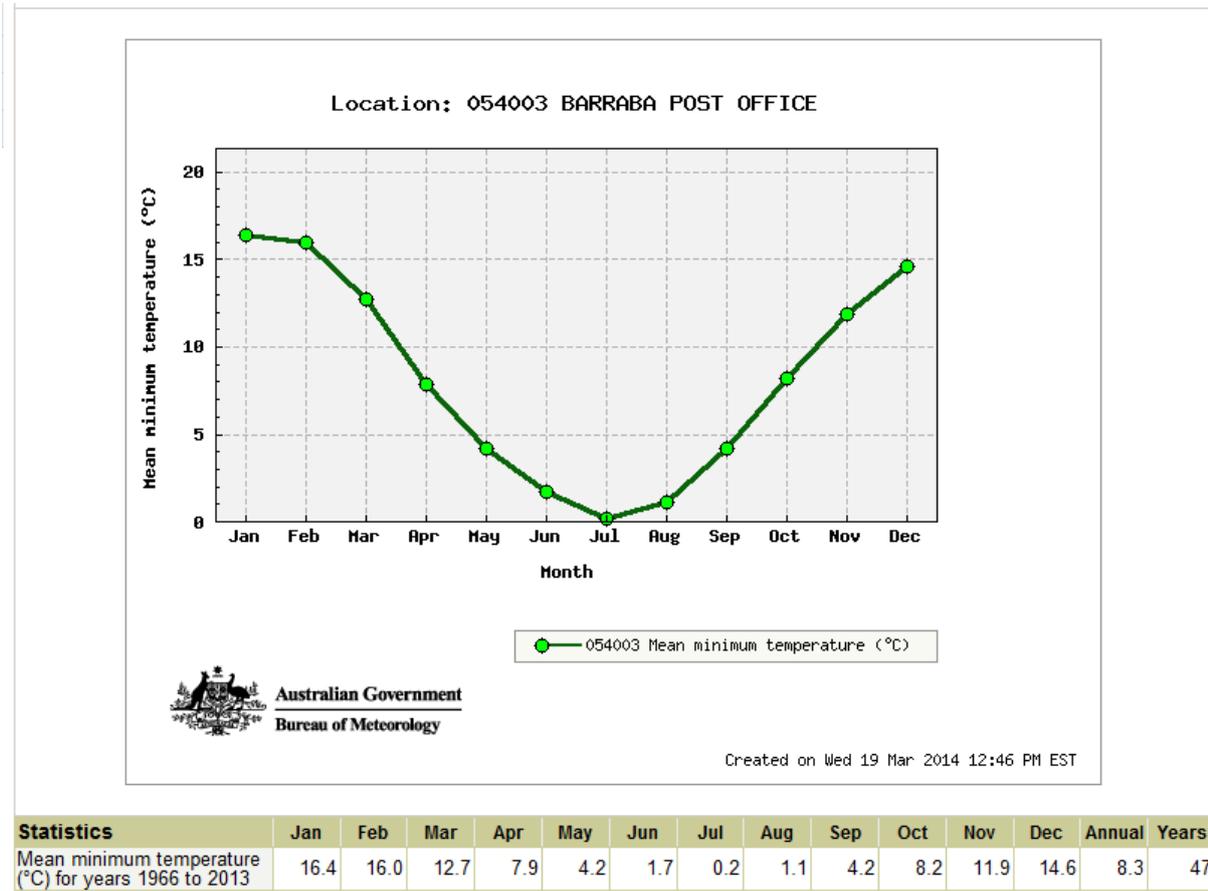
(Source: Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology, [www.bom.gov.au/climate/data/](http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/data/), accessed 19/3/2014)

**Figure 5 Barraba Monthly Mean Maximum Temperatures 1966-2013**



(Source: Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology, [www.bom.gov.au/climate/data/](http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/data/), accessed 19/3/2014)

**Figure 6 Barraba Monthly Mean Minimum Temperatures 1966-2013**



(Source: Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology, [www.bom.gov.au/climate/data/](http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/data/), accessed 19/3/2014)

## Geology of the Area Surrounding Woodsreef

The Woodsreef Asbestos mine lies on the Great Serpentine Belt formed by the Peel Fault Line which borders the New England Region and extends from Warialda through Nundle and across to Taree.

The NSW Department of Primary Industries Soil Conservation Service, (2013) describes the geology of the region as the following:

*“The rock is ultramafic and hence is low in silica but high in magnesium and iron minerals (mafic).*

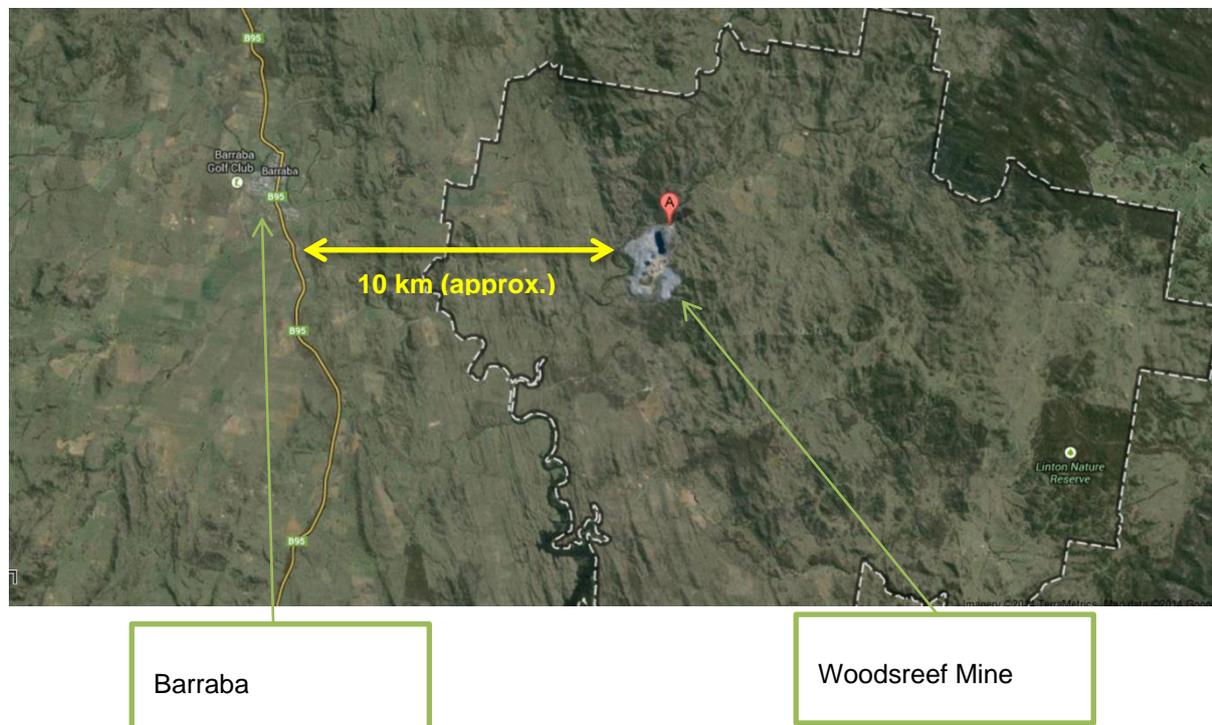
*At the site, the host rock of the asbestos fibres is from the serpentinite which lies between sandstone and argillite and is often overlain by deep alluvial gravels. All the fibre at the site was chrysotile asbestos of the ‘cross fibre’ variety and is similar chemically to the host rock. Fibre lengths vary up to 15 mm but are mostly around 4 mm. Percentage in the rock ranges up to a maximum of 10% but averaged around 4%.”*

## Natural Topography of the Area Surrounding Woodsreef

The Woodsreef topography reflects that formed by the Peel Fault Line. The ridges and valleys generally run in a north south direction. Terrain to the east of the Peel Fault Line is generally higher and steeper, which contrasts with terrain to the west of the Peel Fault Line which is generally lower, “gently undulating valley foothills” (NSW Department of Primary Industries Soil Conservation Service, 2013). The town of Barraba lies to the west of the Peel Fault Line.

The natural topography of the area surrounding Woodsreef can be clearly seen in the aerial view shown below in Figure 7.

**Figure 7 Natural Topography of Area Surrounding Woodsreef Asbestos Mine**



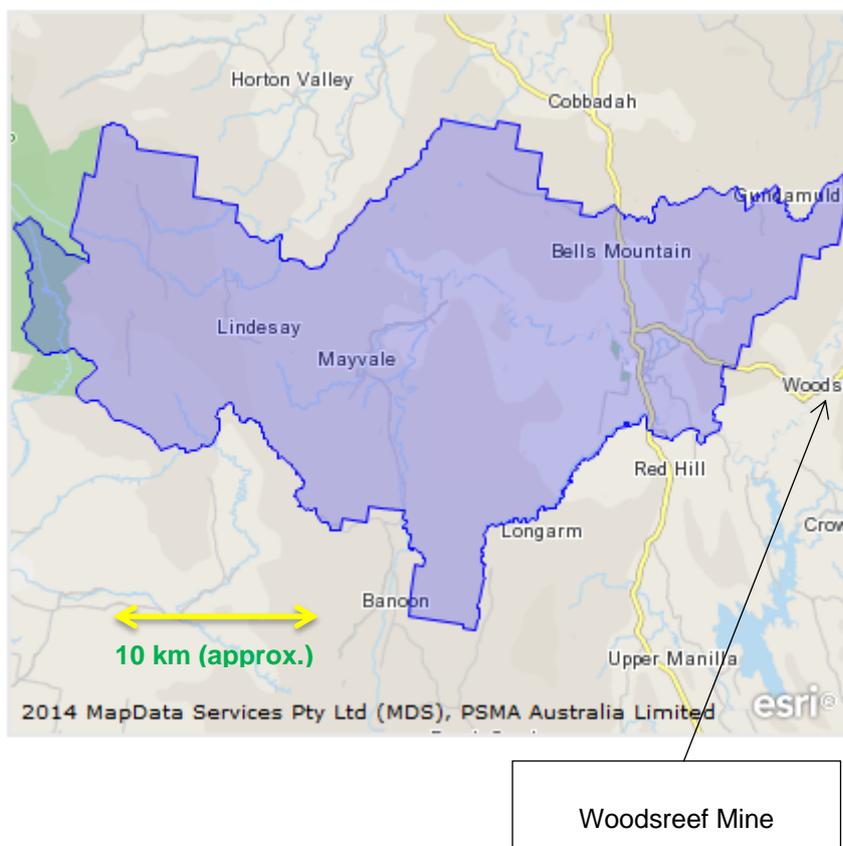
(Source: Google Maps, accessed 18/3/2014)

### 2.3 Details of Local Communities

The local communities in closest proximity to the Woodsreef mine live in the two state suburb areas of Barraba (SSC 10122) and Woodsreef (SSC 12553). From the 2011 Census, the usual population size for the Barraba state suburb area was 1,539 of which 1,150 people were listed as usually residing in the Barraba urban area. The population of state suburb area of Woodsreef during the 2011 Census was 134. The area in the immediate vicinity of the Woodsreef mine is rural in nature with scattered houses generally on farmland. From these areas, the main population centre nearest the mine is the township of Barraba.

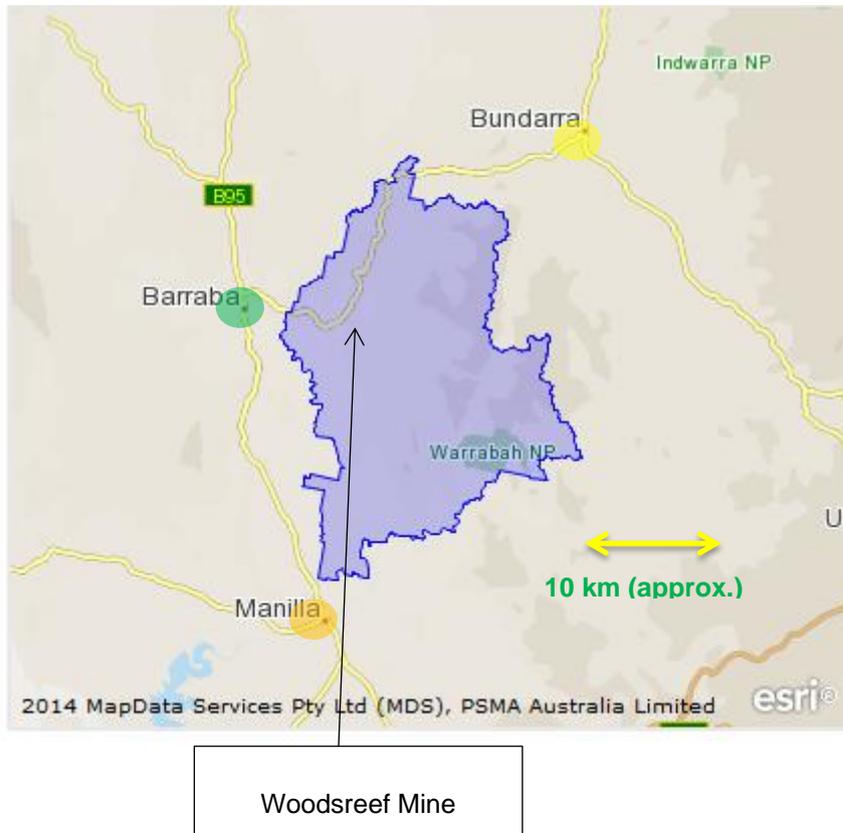
The locations of Barraba and Woodsreef state suburb areas and their proximity to Woodsreef Mine has been set out below in Figure 8 and Figure 9.

**Figure 8 Barraba Suburb Area and Location of Woodsreef Asbestos Mine**



(Source Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2011)

**Figure 9 Woodsreef Suburb Area and Location of Woodsreef Asbestos Mine**



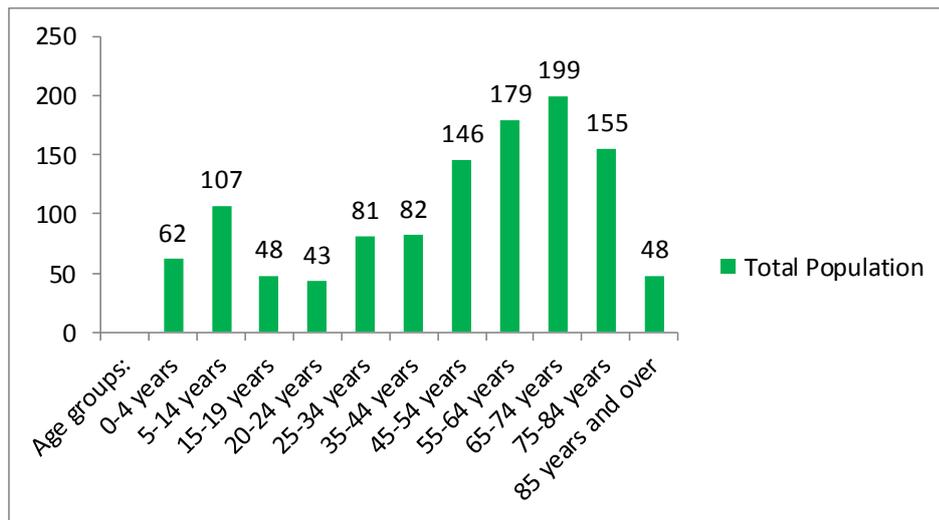
Key	Population Centre	Urban Population
<span style="color: green;">●</span>	Barraba	1,150
<span style="color: yellow;">●</span>	Bundarra	381
<span style="color: orange;">●</span>	Manilla	2,046

(Source Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2011)

### 2.3.1 Community Demographic

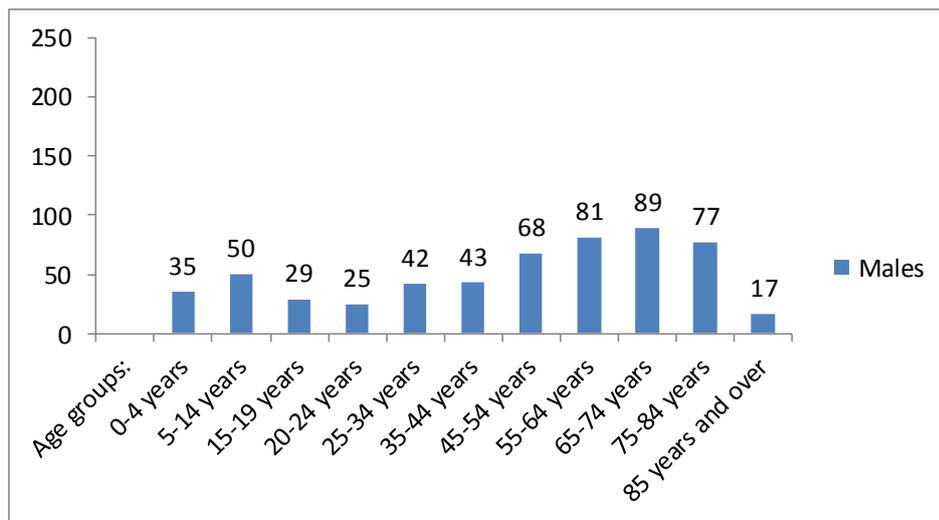
The demographics of Barraba urban area and Woodsreef state suburb area have been set out in Figure 10 to Figure 15.

**Figure 10 Barraba Urban Population by Age, 2011**



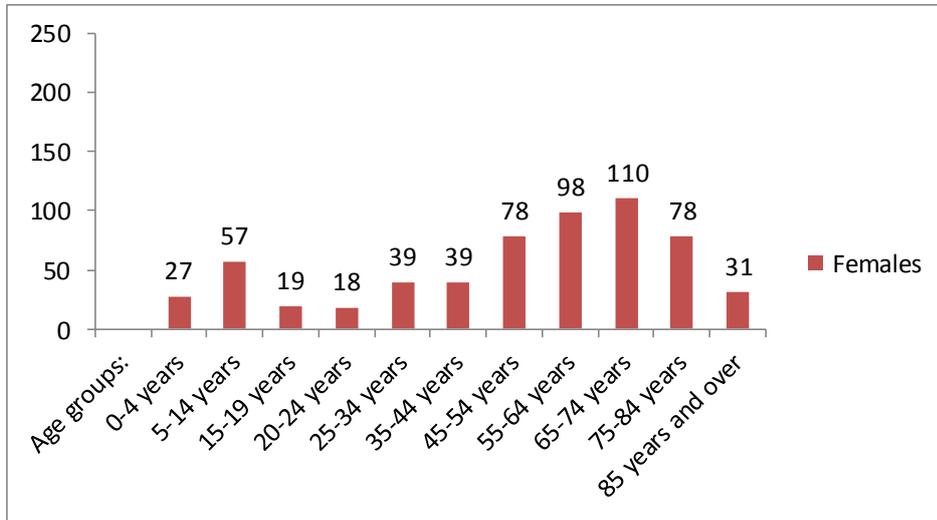
(Source Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2011)

**Figure 11 Barraba Urban Population of Males by Age, 2011**



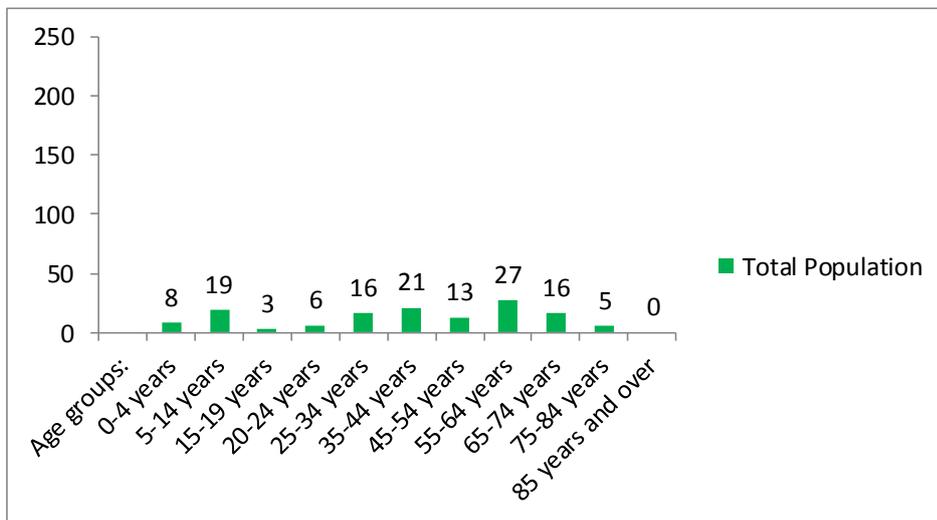
(Source Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2011)

**Figure 12 Barraba Urban Population of Females by Age, 2011**



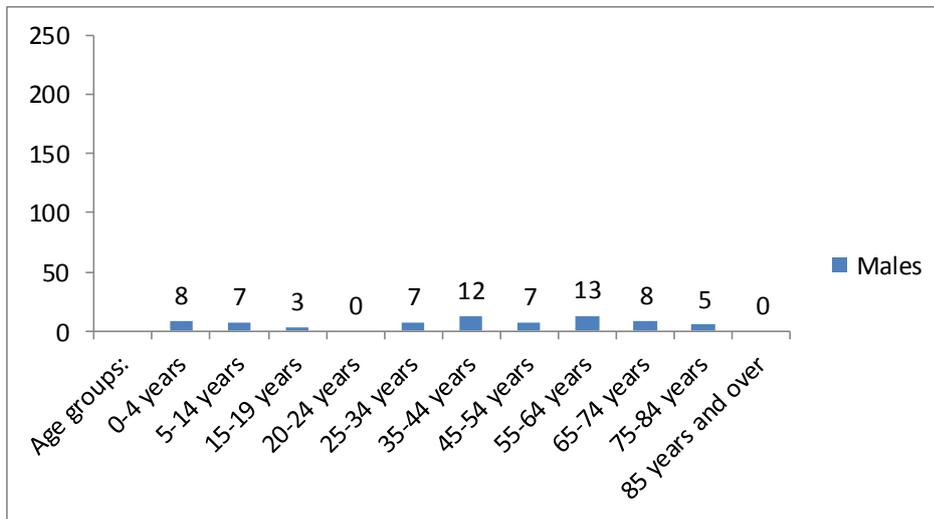
(Source Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2011)

**Figure 13 Woodsreef Population by Age, 2011**



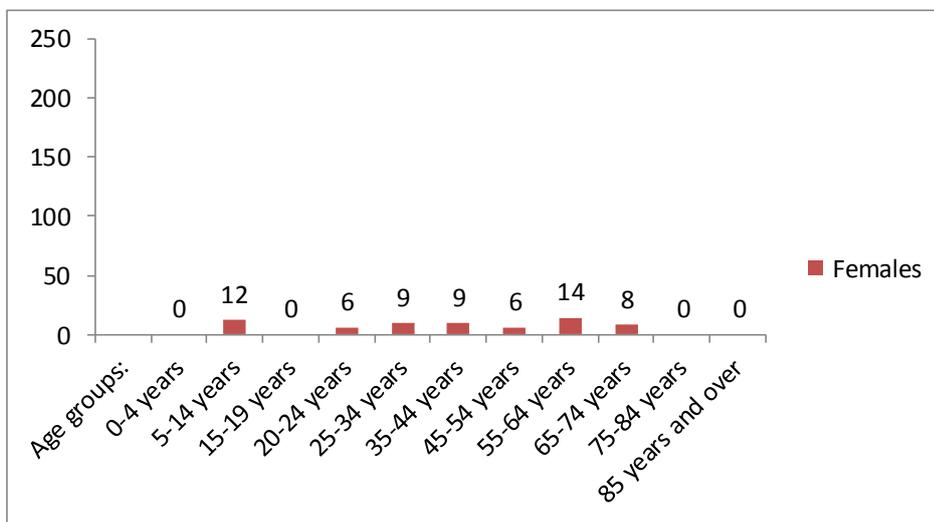
(Source Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2011)

**Figure 14 Woodsreef Population of Males by Age, 2011**



(Source Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2011)

**Figure 15 Woodsreef Population of Females by Age, 2011**



(Source Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2011)

### 2.3.2 Community Socio-Economic Status

To indicate the relative social economic status of the population, this study utilised the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) 2011*. The data in this document was developed by the ABS to rank areas in Australia according to relative social-economic advantage and disadvantage, based on information from the five yearly census (*Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013*).

The ABS defines relative socio-economic advantage or disadvantage in terms of the “peoples access to material and social resources, and their ability to participate in society”. The variables used by the ABS in determining in the SEIFA included:

- Income variable
- Education variables
- Employment variable
- Occupation variable
- Housing variables
- Other miscellaneous indicators of relative advantage and disadvantage

(*Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013*)

The information available is based on state suburb level information. The lower the SEIFA Score the more socio – economic disadvantaged an area is. For example the lowest SEIFA Score is in the vicinity of 669, indicating the state suburb with the most socio-economic disadvantage in the Australia. In contrast the highest SEIFA Score is in the vicinity of 1100, indicating the state suburb with the least socio-economic disadvantage in the Australia, or to put it another way the most socio-economic advantaged area in Australia.

The Barraba state suburb area had a SEIFA Score of 876 which indicated Barraba was ranked in the lowest 10% of state suburb areas across Australia. This indicated that the Barraba area was in the bottom 10% of areas for socio-economic advantage.

The Woodsreef state suburb area had a SEIFA Score of 976 which indicated Woodsreef was ranked in the 40% decile of state suburb areas across Australia. This indicated that the Woodsreef area was closer to the middle range of areas for socio-economic advantage across Australia.

The SEIFA Scores above were calculated by the Australian Bureau of Statistics using data from the 2011 Census. As stated previously, the information available is based on state suburb level information. Accordingly within a state area, the socio-economic conditions of individual residents will vary with some individuals more disadvantaged or advantaged than others.

### 2.3.3 Community Health Data

The current community health data for the township of Barraba was not available at the time of writing. It should be noted that even if the data was readily available, data on small populations such as Barraba may lack epidemiological power to detect health effects. Furthermore it is usually more sensitive and useful to measure hazard directly rather than measure ill health (*enHealth, 2001*).

### 2.3.4 Special Populations

Special populations are sub groups within the community who may be at greater risk of adverse health effects. The increased risk may be due to factors such as age, ill health or close proximity to an identified hazard, in this case the Woodsreef Mine.

Children or teenagers under eighteen years of age are considered at higher risk than older members of the population. In this age group humans are considered to have not reached maturity. Therefore their bodies may respond differently to adults when exposed to a toxic or carcinogenic threat. In many cases they will be at higher risk from the exposure compared to adults.

In the Barraba township there are three schools, Barraba Central School which is composed of a Primary School and High School, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, and one pre-school, Barraba Pre-School. The approximate student numbers attending each school are set out below in Table 2.

**Table 2 Approximate Student Enrolments in Schools Located in the Barraba Township**

School	Approximate Student Enrolments	Comments
Barraba Central Primary School	100	Estimate from 2008 – 2012 from School reports
Barraba Central High School	100	Estimate from 2008 – 2012 from School reports
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	65	Average enrolment from 2010 – 2012
Barraba Pre-School	45	

As mentioned above other groups considered at potentially greater risk of adverse health impacts include the elderly and those in ill-health. In Barraba there is one retirement facility, Richardson House, which can cater for up to 21 residents. Barraba also has a local hospital Barraba Hospital listed as having less than 50 beds (*NHPA, 2014*). There are also two small health centres, Barraba Medical Centre and Barraba Community Health.

Another special population with potentially higher risk are the residents living in close proximity to the Woodsreef Mine. There are approximately twenty seven houses on properties within an approximate 5 km radius of the Woodsreef mine (*SLR, 2013a*). Of these premises it is anticipated that the majority would be occupied at any one time.

### 2.3.5 Transient Populations

As well as residents usually residing in Barraba and the Woodsreef area, there will be transient population of visitors to these areas. These visitors are mostly in the area for recreational activities. Examples of these activities include camping, fishing, bird watching, fossicking, visiting the Flora Trail, picnicking, viewing the Woodsreef mine site, etc. The time spent around the Barraba, Woodsreef areas is likely to vary from hours to days, dependent on the activities undertaken during their stay. These recreational activities will be discussed in more detail in the Risk Assessment section of this report.

### 2.3.6 Transport Routes Near Woodsreef Mine

The only transport route in current use near the Woodsreef mine is the Bundarra – Barraba Road. This road skirts the northern edge of the mine site for approximately 1.4 kilometres. There is no data available on current vehicle movements on the Bundarra – Barraba Road. However from observations by the authors when conducting field work near the mine site, the traffic on this road is infrequent and probably around 50 vehicle movements in a 24 hour period.

Historically The Mine Road ran along the eastern edge of the mine site to join up with the Bundarra – Barraba Rd. However The Mine Road was closed in early 2014 and is no longer considered a transport route near the mine.

## 3 RISK ASSESSMENT

### 3.1 Introduction

#### 3.1.1 What is Risk Assessment

Risk assessments have been defined in many ways but all share the concept of a process for estimating and characterising the potential risks associated with various agents or activities.

The National Research Council (1983) definition is:

*Risk assessment is the systematic scientific characterisation of potential adverse health effects resulting from human exposures to hazardous agents or situations.*

A risk assessment is a multidisciplinary process that can involve many scientific disciplines. It may be a simple screening exercise or a complex project over many years.

#### 3.1.2 Risk Assessment Approach

The methodology adopted in the conduct of the Human Health Impact Assessment is consistent with that used to evaluate risks to human health associated with a population's exposure to a hazardous agent, in this case asbestos.

The approach to the assessment of risk to human health is based on the protocols/guidelines recommended by the enHealth Council. These are detailed in the document "Health Impact Assessment Guidelines, September 2001".

Identification and assessment of the potential risks to human health within the site have been undertaken by implementing four prime tasks. These tasks are:

1. **Issue Identification** – This involves an evaluation of the available information on the potential occurrence and distribution of asbestos transported by natural processes, such as wind and rain, from the Woodsreef Mine to surrounding communities.
2. **Hazard Assessment** – This task provides a review of the current understanding of the toxicity of asbestos to humans and identifies hazards associated with exposure to airborne asbestos fibres.
3. **Exposure Assessment** – This task draws on the evaluation undertaken as part of the "Issue Identification" stage identifying the groups of people who may be exposed to airborne asbestos released during natural processes, such as wind and rain, from the Woodsreef Mine to surrounding communities and quantifying exposure concentrations.
4. **Risk Characterisation** – This task provides the qualitative evaluation of potential risks to human health. The characterisation of risk is based on the review of toxicity of asbestos fibres and the assessment of the magnitude of exposure.

### 3.2 Objectives

The objective of the Human Health Risk Assessment is to contribute to the analysis of asbestos released and transported by natural processes, such as wind and rain, from the Woodsreef Mine to surrounding communities and provide an assessment of the risk to human health associated with the presence of asbestos fibres. The risk assessment aims to:

- Identify the groups of people who may be exposed to the asbestos potentially released from the Woodsreef Mine;

- Compare exposure concentrations with contemporary health standards
- Identify the health risks associated with exposure should it occur; and
- Assess and communicate the identified risks.

Risk assessments of the nature performed here do not provide definitive assessments of the acceptability of risk for specific individuals. Risk assessments should only be applied on a probabilistic basis to a population of exposed persons.

It should be noted that the scope of this Human Health Impact Assessment is limited to asbestos and does not include any other agents of potential concern (if any).

### **3.3 Issue Identification**

#### **3.3.1 Naturally Occurring Asbestos**

As would be expected from a mining operation, the Woodsreef Mine is situated in an area where naturally occurring asbestos (NOA) is found in significant concentrations over a broad area. Areas of naturally occurring asbestos are subject to the usual weathering of the parent material potentially leading to the enrichment of local soils with asbestos fibres. Therefore the presence of asbestos fibres, released by natural forces, in local soils is to be expected. However the extent of natural release of asbestos into soils is unclear. There is a paucity of data on natural background concentrations of asbestos fibres in soils adjacent to asbestos ore bodies. Furthermore localised asbestos concentrations in soils will be very much dependent on site specific factors relating to natural weathering forces, for example local topography, vegetation cover, whether the area is used for farming or pristine wilderness, rainfall patterns etc.

With regards to the area surrounding the Woodsreef deposit the background soil concentrations of naturally occurring asbestos are unclear. However at least in the area of the Woodsreef mine and immediate surrounds the contribution of asbestos released into soils by natural processes weathering naturally occurring asbestos is likely to be dwarfed by the contribution of asbestos released into the environment by mining processes.

#### **3.3.2 Woodsreef Mine**

The mine site is approximately 290 hectares in size and is reported to contain a 75 million tonne waste rock dump and 25 million tonne tailings dump. The site also contains two derelict buildings and four open pits (*Parsons Brinckerhoff, 2012 & NSW Department of Primary Industries Soil Conservation Service, 2013*). The mine has been derelict since 1983.

The mine site can be functionally divided into the following areas: Open Pits (four on site), Mill Building Area, Waste Dump (three sites, south, west and northeast), and a Tailings Dump. The Mine Road winds along the eastern perimeter of the mine except for a section of road that runs in-between the South Waste Dump and the Tailings Dump (See Figure 3 above).

The Mill Building is slated for demolition in 2014. It is proposed that a Containment Cell be dug to the west of the Mill Building. The building is to be demolished and buried in the Containment Cell.

The Waste Dumps consist of processed rocks and overburden. The Tailings have been reported as partially processed ore, understood to be predominately asbestos, stockpiled for later reprocessing that never occurred (*NSW Department of Primary Industries Soil Conservation Service, 2013*).

Water drainage studies of the mine site shows on-site drainage flows, that is, back on to the mine site, and off-site drainage flow from the mine site. A siltation / drainage system is in place, partially left over from the mine operations and partially enhanced and expanded by the Soil Conservation Service. These changes were designed to improve drainage and minimise asbestos containing sediments being transported off site with water flows (*NSW Department of Primary Industries Soil Conservation Service, 2013*).

The potential for natural processes, such as rain and wind, to transport materials from the mine site to areas outside the mine boundary will be a major factor in determining the likelihood of the general public being exposed to asbestos from the mine. Wind erosion and transport of asbestos is less significant than waterborne migration in terms of the mass of material that can migrate, although windborne asbestos can be more significant in terms of health risks (*Department of Industry and Resources & Department of Local Government and Regional Development, 2006*).

The ability of the mine site materials and soils to resist these forces of erosion will vary over time. The characteristics of the parent material to form a stable crust will reduce the potential for off-site migration caused by both wind and rain. If the materials do start to migrate under the influence of natural forces such as rain and water movement, then the direction of water drainage from the source materials will determine if the materials leave the mine site. Therefore the ability of a surface to form a stable crust and the probable water drainage flows from the area of the mine, are primary factors when determining the likely hazard from off-site migration of mine materials.

Ultimately natural forces will be responsible for transporting some materials and soils both off the mine site and within the mine site. However any potential asbestos hazard coupled with the transport of materials will be dependent on three main factors. This includes the asbestos present in the material, how much asbestos is present in the material and in the form of the asbestos.

The first and second factors (the presence or not of asbestos in material and how much asbestos is present) are both of obvious importance. The third factor, the form of the asbestos in the materials, is extremely important for any hazard assessment. The simple underlying principle being within some limits, the smaller the asbestos fibres present the greater the asbestos hazard.

If the asbestos is present as a natural band, encased in rock, with little chance of releasing asbestos fibres, the hazard is negligible. In contrast, asbestos will pose the greatest hazard to humans when present in the form of small fibres or loose bundle of asbestos.

The asbestos hazard to humans occurs via the respiratory route, the breathing in of asbestos fibres. Asbestos can be present in a material but not in a respirable form. Accordingly the hazard posed by mine site materials and soils will be dependent on the ability of the material to release respirable asbestos fibres.

The definition of respirable asbestos fibres is those fibres less than 3µm in width, and greater than 5µm in length and with a width length to width ratio of greater than 3:1 (*AS 4964-2004*). The presence or absence of respirable asbestos fibres is determined during laboratory analysis, using Trace Asbestos Analysis, if Trace Asbestos is reported it indicates the presence of respirable asbestos fibres (*AS 4964-2004*).

If respirable asbestos fibres are present in a sample, by nature of their size the fibres will likely be found in the finest particle size fraction. With regards to laboratory analysis, generally the smallest particle size fractions separated by sieving methods are particles of less than 2mm in size.

Therefore materials that pose the highest potential hazard to exposed humans will be materials with relatively high asbestos content and with the asbestos fibres present in the respirable size range.

### **3.3.3 Key Points – Woodsreef Mine**

- The mine is situated in an area of naturally occurring asbestos
- With regards to the area surrounding the Woodsreef deposit the background soil concentrations of naturally occurring asbestos are unclear.
- In the area of the mine and immediate surrounds the contribution of asbestos released into soils by natural processes weathering naturally occurring asbestos is likely to be dwarfed by the contribution of asbestos released into the environment by mining processes.
- The mine site is approximately 290 hectares in size and is reported to contain a 75 million tonne waste rock dump and 25 million tonne tailings dump.
- Water drainage on the mine site shows drainage flows both back on to the mine site and flows off the mine site.

- The potential for natural processes, such as rain and wind, to transport materials from the mine site to areas outside the mine boundary is a major factor in determining the likelihood of the general public being exposed to asbestos from the mine.
- Potential asbestos hazards coupled with the transport of materials will be dependent on three main factors. This includes whether asbestos present in the material, how much asbestos is present in the material and in what form is the asbestos.
- Materials that pose the highest potential hazard to exposed humans will be materials with relatively high asbestos content and with the asbestos fibres present in the respirable size range.

### **3.3.4 Community Chosen for Assessment**

The community chosen for the purposes of this assessment was the residents of Barraba, the residents who live in or near Woodsreef, and residents between the mine and Barraba. As previously stated, the local communities in closest proximity to the Woodsreef mine live in the two state suburb areas of Barraba (SSC 10122) and Woodsreef (SSC 12553). From the 2011 Census, the usual population size for the Barraba state suburb area was 1,539 of which 1,150 people were listed as usually residing in the Barraba urban area. The population of state suburb area of Woodsreef during the 2011 Census was 134. The area in the immediate vicinity of the Woodsreef mine is rural in nature with scattered houses generally on farmland. From these areas, the main population centre nearest the mine is the township of Barraba.

The demographics, socioeconomic status, etc. of these communities has been previously described above in Section 2.3.

There is also a “community” of transient observers and recreational users who use the area near the mine. Some of these people will be local residents and some will be residents from outside the local area, visiting the area for sightseeing or recreational purposes.

### **3.3.5 Recreational Activities Undertaken Near Woodsreef Mine**

Recreational activities in the vicinity of the mine cover a range of activities. The activities can be either passive or active in nature. For the purpose of this study, passive activities are taken to include activities that do not involve much movement around site with little potential to disturb soil or vegetation. Examples of passive activities include observing the mine from the road side, or picnicking near the mine. Active activities are taken to include activities that involve greater movement around the site with increased potential to disturb soil or vegetation.

Passive activities tend to occur around the northern fringe of the mine site, along the Bundarra – Barraba Road.

The following activities have been listed as examples of the main passive activities conducted in the vicinity of the mine.

1. Viewing the mine site - There are a few areas where tourists can park their cars on the road side and walk a short distance to the mine fence for views over the mine site.
2. Picnicking - Areas where tourists can picnic close to the mine are located to the northwest of the mine where the Bundarra – Barraba Road runs near Ironbark Creek.
3. Attending services at the St John's Woodsreef Church – A small church with services scheduled the second Sunday of each month.

Active activities tend to occur mostly on lands outside the mine site area, around the northern half of the mine, including both the western and eastern sides of the mine perimeter. It should be noted that some activities occur approximately 4km to the south of the mine, at a camping site off the Pera – Linton Road near where Ironbark Creek enters Split Rock Reservoir.

The following activities have been listed as examples of the main active activities conducted in the vicinity of the mine.

1. Camping along Ironbark Creek in the area to the northwest to north of the mine, within 100 metres to 2km from the mine site.
2. Camping along Ironbark Creek in the area to the south of the mine, at a camping site off the Pera – Linton Road near where Ironbark Creek enters Split Rock Reservoir. Approximately 4km south of the mine site.
3. Fossicking for gold and minerals in the area to the north of the mine, within 2km of the mine site.
4. Bird Watching in the area to the north of the mine, within 100 metres to 2km from the mine site.
5. Walking along the Flora Trail in the area to the east of the mine, within 50 metres to 500 metres from the mine site.
6. Fishing along the Ironbark River, near the mine site.
7. Use of off road vehicles including cars and motorbikes, in the areas around the mine.

### **3.3.6 Key Points - Community & Recreation**

- The largest community in proximity to the mine is the town of Barraba with approximately 1,150 people usually residing in town which is located approximately 15km to the west of the mine. Closer to the mine is the state suburb area of Woodsreef with population of approximately 134 people.
- The lands adjacent to the mine and between the mine site and the town of Barraba are rural in nature and only lightly populated.
- Recreational activities, both passive and active are undertaken in areas ranging from adjacent to the mine to areas up to 4km from the mine.
- Recreational activities, both passive and active are undertaken by local residents and tourists to the area.

### **3.3.7 Asbestos & Land**

As would be expected with a derelict asbestos mine, the presence of asbestos is widespread on the mine site. Furthermore asbestos present on the site and adjacent to the mine site is in the form of both natural occurring asbestos and processed or partially processed asbestos.

Naturally occurring asbestos in the mine site has been reported as averaging 4% of the parent material (*Dames & Moore, 1997*). The naturally occurring asbestos will be largely bound in the rock formation. Therefore the contribution of undisturbed naturally occurring asbestos to the overall release of asbestos from the mine site to the surrounding environment should be minimal.

In the broader regional area surrounding the Great Serpentine Belt the presence of naturally occurring asbestos is likely to have led to areas where weathering processes have released asbestos fibres from the rock into the local soils. Any local enrichment of asbestos in soils from natural processes is likely to be patchy in distribution and very much subject to site specific conditions. Furthermore there is little information available on the likely localised asbestos concentrations in soils as a result of weathering of naturally occurring asbestos in the region. Therefore the extent of natural asbestos enrichment of local soils is unclear.

The largest source of asbestos in a form that may be easily transported off the mine site into the surrounding environment by natural forces such as wind and water will be the processed and partially processed material on the mine site. As previously stated the mine site is reported to contain a 75 million tonne waste rock dump and 25 million tonne tailings dump. The Waste Dumps consist of processed rocks and overburden. The Tailings have been reported as partially processed ore, understood to be predominately asbestos, stockpiled for later reprocessing that never occurred (*NSW Department of Primary Industries Soil Conservation Service (NSW SCS), 2013*).

SLR Consulting conducted a Hazard Assessment of the mine site and adjacent lands in 2013 (SLR, 2013a). This study included a site walk over inspection of the mine site with observations made on the site conditions, including crusting and evidence of ground surface migration noted. Representative soil samples were collected at locations across the area and analysed for asbestos content.

Evidence of current erosion and migration of materials within the mine site and off the mine site were readily apparent in many areas of the mine. It appeared that migration of materials is likely to be intermittent in nature and linked to significant events such as heavy rain or the localised catastrophic collapse of sections of the material such as occurs when water causes erosion to undermine areas leading to collapse of previously stable crusts or materials (*SLR, 2103a*).

All documents reviewed provided historic evidence of significant and ongoing erosion. Dames & Moore (1997) reported that tailings dump erosion and slumping was progressive and ongoing with visible cracking and subsidence around the top of embankments and channel erosion on steeper slopes. This description continues to be valid in 2013.

Control of the ongoing erosion across the mine site appears unlikely in the foreseeable future. The Woodsreef Derelict Asbestos Mine - Drainage Assessment Report (*NSW SCS, 2013*) states that "*Erosion control is the lowest priority due to the large area to be addressed and the cost to immediately provide stability.*"

SLR (2013a) conducted asbestos analysis on samples of bulk materials collected at forty six locations, representative of the broad areas within the mine site. These areas included:

- Waste/overburden,
- Tailings, Road cuttings,
- Siltation systems sediments,
- Mill Building vicinity,
- Proposed containment cell vicinity
- Additional areas likely to have potential for off-site migration of asbestos containing materials.

These additional areas included the following locations:

- Ironbark Creek, adjacent to pumping station; to tyre mount; and floodplain;
- Ironbark Creek, east flood plain, midway; Ironbark
- Creek, start of walking track north east
- North of mine central waypoint, north side of Bundarra – Barraba Road
- Entrance to mine, east of building

- South end tailings, east road culvert, adjacent to private land;
- Flora Trail adjacent to pit 1, west;
- West of waste dump near pump station;
- Northwest of overburden

The hazard assessment identified that sources of asbestos were present throughout almost all sampling sites. The only exceptions were two sites, Ironbark Creek, start of walking track NE and one sample from Siltation Systems Sediments.

The approximate quantity of asbestos present in the soil particle fraction size less than 2 mm in diameter of the collected samples was estimated as part of the analysis by SLR (2013a). The results indicated estimated asbestos concentrations on a percentage volume to volume ratio ranged from less than 0.1% to 95%. These concentrations clearly indicate the potential scale of the asbestos contamination on the mine site and adjacent lands.

As would be expected in a site such as this, asbestos concentrations varied greatly across the site and also within common functional locations (e.g. Tailings, Road Cuttings, etc) on the site. The broad groupings of sample locations and the estimated asbestos content on the smallest particle size fraction measured (<2mm) have been set out in Table 3.

**Table 3 Estimated Ranges of Asbestos Concentrations in < 2mm Particle Size Fraction of Samples (% vol/vol)**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Estimated Range of Concentrations of Asbestos in &lt; 2mm Particle Size Fraction of Samples (% vol/vol)</b>
Waste/overburden	<0.1 to 90%
Tailings	<0.1 to 90%
Road cuttings	<0.1 to 70%
Siltation systems sediments	No asbestos detected to 40%
Mill Building vicinity	<0.1 to 95%
Proposed containment cell vicinity	25 to 70%
Ironbark Creek – land in vicinity of creek	No asbestos detected to 90%
<b>Single Location Samples</b>	
North of mine central waypoint, north side of Bundarra – Barraba Road	2%*
Entrance to mine, east of building	<0.1%*
South end tailings, east road culvert, adjacent to private land	5%*
Flora Trail adjacent to pit 1, west	40%*
West of waste dump near pump station	< 0.1%*
North west of overburden	< 0.1%*

Note \* = Locations with one sample only

Critically, respirable asbestos fibres were present at the majority of locations sampled. Asbestos fibres in this size range pose a significant hazard to human health if they are inhaled.

### 3.3.8 Key Points - Asbestos & Land

The conclusions that can be drawn in relation to asbestos on the mine site and adjacent lands are the following:

- In the broader regional area surrounding the Great Serpentine Belt the presence of naturally occurring asbestos is likely to have led to areas where weathering processes have released asbestos fibres from the rock into the local soils.
- Any local enrichment of asbestos in soils from natural processes is likely to be patchy in distribution and very much subject to site specific conditions. Furthermore there is little information available on the likely localised asbestos concentrations in soils as a result of weathering of naturally occurring asbestos in the region. Therefore the extent of natural asbestos enrichment of local soils is unclear.
- There is evidence of historic and current erosion and migration of materials within the mine site and off the mine site in many areas of the mine.
- The migration of materials is likely to be intermittent in nature and linked to significant events such as heavy rain or the localised catastrophic collapse of previously stable surface crusts or materials.
- There is significant asbestos contamination across most if not all of the mine site.
- There is evidence of various degrees of asbestos contamination across adjacent lands to the mine.
- The concentrations of asbestos in the particle size fraction less than 2 mm in diameter of material across the site varied greatly from less than 0.1% to 95% (vol/vol).
- Respirable asbestos fibres were present in soils across most of the mine site
- Respirable asbestos fibres were also present in land adjacent to the mine.
- The monitoring of actual respirable asbestos fibre levels in air was undertaken at various representative locations and is presented in Section 3.6.

### 3.3.9 Asbestos & Water

Water movement associated with the mine site is important as water has the potential to transport significant amounts of bulk material from the mine site to the surrounding environment and therefore closer to people.

The major waterway transporting surface water away from the areas near the mine is Ironbark Creek which is located on the western side of the mine area. Ironbark Creek flows in a southerly direction eventually entering the Spilt Rock Reservoir. There are smaller ephemeral creeks and drainage around the eastern and southern sides of the mine area.

Water drainage assessments on the mine site shows drainage flows both back on to the mine site and flows off the mine site. It has been estimated that for approximately 65% of the mine site area water drainage is retained on the mine site itself. Therefore approximately 35% of the mine site area drains water off site. Of this approximately 12% of the mine area drains uncontrolled off the mine site and 23% of the mine area drains through some form of sediment control.

There is a paucity of information on the amount of asbestos transported off the mine site into the local creeks and Ironbark Creek or the more distant Split Rock Reservoir. The evidence that is available consists mostly of anecdotal, visual evidence of fibrous material or silt observed at drainage points near

the mine site. Dames & Moore (1997) quoted a 1978 report (*Toyer & Main, 1978*) in which erosion and movement of mine tailings into Ironbark Creek was observed. The Toyer & Main report also commented on preliminary sampling of asbestos concentration in water in Ironbark Creek and “pits” which ranged from 80,000 to 250,000 asbestos fibres per mL of water. However it should be note that in 1978 the mine was in operation and at that time there was little if any sediment control to capture drainage off the mine site. There is currently a siltation / drainage system is in place to capture or impede the movement of materials from the mine site into the surrounding waterways.

Dames & Moore (1997) conducted limited sediment sampling to “update and confirm the results obtained by Toyer & Main (1978)”. The nine sampling sites in streams and creeks replicated sites utilised by Toyer & Main (1978). Asbestos in the form of chrysotile was found in Nangahrah Creek (which flows into Ironbark Creek north of the mine) and Ironbark Creek, both of which receive drainage from the mine site. Chrysotile was also found in sediment of water drainage systems that drain off the Tailings Dump and South Waste Dump into Ironbark Creek. In contrast chrysotile was not detected in samples taken from the sediments of the Manilla River, the river which Ironbark Creek flows into approximately 6 km southwest of the mine.

It should be noted that asbestos from weathering of naturally occurring asbestos away from the mine area is likely to be entering the local streams. The contribution of this source of asbestos to local waterways is unclear. However in the immediate vicinity of the mine the natural contribution of background asbestos is likely to be dwarfed by the transport of asbestos from the mine site into the waterways.

The conclusions that may be drawn from the available observations of others and the authors own observations is that asbestos containing material has been transported from the mine site into Ironbark Creek over the years. Once in the Ironbark Creek system the asbestos would behave in a similar manner to other sediments entering the creek. That is settling out in areas of low flow, being buried over time in the creek bed by incoming sediments, occasionally resuspended and transported with the general sediments during periods of sediment disturbances such as during flooding events. If asbestos containing sediments have been transported along Ironbark Creek and entered the Split Rock Reservoir it would be expected that the asbestos material would settle out into the reservoir sediments and ultimately be buried over time by natural sedimentation processes. Once buried the asbestos should have little or no impact on the environment or end-users of the reservoir water.

### **3.3.10 Key Points – Asbestos & Water**

- Asbestos containing materials have been transported from the mine site into Ironbark Creek over many years.
- The amount of asbestos transported from the mine site into Ironbark Creek is unclear.
- The amount of asbestos from weathering of naturally occurring asbestos transported into Ironbark Creek is unclear.
- Asbestos in the Ironbark Creek system would settle out in areas of low flow, becoming buried over time by incoming sediments
- Asbestos in Ironbark Creek sediment will occasionally be resuspended and transported with the general sediments during periods of sediment disturbances such as during flooding events.
- If asbestos has been transported into Split Rock Reservoir it would be expected to settle out into the reservoir sediments and be buried over time by natural sedimentation processes. Once buried the asbestos should have little or no impact on the environment or end-users of the reservoir water.

### 3.3.11 Asbestos & Air Quality

There is limited data available on the effects of the mine site on local air quality. The air monitoring for asbestos that had previously taken place was often related to works being conducted on the mine site. Dames & Moore (1997) conducted air dispersion modelling to assess the potential airborne asbestos concentrations “downwind of the tailings dump”. The modelling procedure assumed baseline asbestos concentrations at the tailings of 0.01 to 0.04 fibres/mL air which was based on concentrations recorded during remediation works in 1992. The Dames & Moore (1997) modelling indicated that during high wind velocities (up to 10 m/s) downwind asbestos concentrations would likely decline by 70% within 5 km of the tailings dump and by 90% beyond 15 km from the tailings dump.

For the current study, a programme of monitoring of airborne asbestos was conducted with the aim of obtaining up to date information on the potential exposures of local communities to airborne asbestos from the mine site in its current state.

Air Dispersion Modelling was used to identify locations that subsequently were used when monitoring airborne asbestos fibres. Data from these two procedures was then used in the estimation of the area likely to be affected, the intensity and duration of the effect and the level of health impact (actual health effects) on the risk population (SLR, 2013b).

The Australian Occupational Exposure Standard for airborne asbestos was used to assess results of current and historic airborne asbestos concentrations. At the time of writing, the SafeWork Australia eight-hour Time Weighted Average (TWA) for asbestos exposure is 0.1 fibres/mL. An eight-hour TWA is translated as the average airborne concentration of asbestos over a normal eight-hour working day, for a five-day working week. This SafeWork Australia exposure standard is not however, a discriminative dividing line between safe and dangerous concentrations of airborne asbestos fibres but is to be used by appropriately qualified and experienced persons to interpret risk in relation to exposure circumstances.

The methodology used by SafeWork Australia for reviewing and updating the national exposure standards involves the use and acceptance of overseas standards from governmental and non-governmental sources. Sources are selected after an assessment against several factors including quality and availability of supporting documentation, integrity of the development process and consistency with the SafeWork Australia philosophies. Sources include the United Kingdom Health and Safety Executive HSE “Occupational Exposure Limits” and the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH) “Threshold Limit Values”.

### 3.3.12 Air Dispersion Modelling

Provided is a brief summary of the modelling assessment conducted to assist with the identification of key monitoring locations that were subsequently utilised in the human health risk assessment.

The objective of this modelling exercise was to identify which of the identified potential monitoring locations were likely to be exposed to lower or greater levels of exposure as compared to other locations, and whether the corresponding relative exposure varies according to changes in seasonal weather conditions. This was performed to ensure that the locations that were predicted to potentially experience elevated likelihood of exposure were incorporated within the monitoring program, and that the program accounted for seasonal variations in dispersion conditions.

Please note that the results presented in this summary do not represent exposure rates, nor do they represent an assessment of environmental harm or health risk. The results are presented as a comparison of predicted impacts at selected locations relative to the maximum off-site impact that is predicted to occur under a range of meteorological conditions covering a 12 year period.

**For clarification, the locations predicted to experience higher exposure potentials should not be interpreted as being 'at risk' or associated with environmental harm.**

In order to differentiate the comparative exposure potential the following terminology was used:

- **Category A Potential** – locations predicted to have a rate of exposure greater than or equal to the maximum rate of exposure predicted at the identified receptor locations.
- **Category B Potential** – locations predicted to have a rate of exposure greater than or equal to 50% of the maximum rate of exposure predicted at the identified receptor locations.
- **Category C Potential** – locations predicted to have a rate of exposure greater than or equal to 20% of the maximum rate of exposure predicted at the identified receptor locations.
- **Category D Potential** – locations predicted to have a rate of exposure greater than or equal to 10% of the maximum rate of exposure predicted at the identified receptor locations.
- **Category E Potential** – locations predicted to have a rate of exposure less than 10% of the maximum rate of exposure predicted at the identified receptor locations.

### 3.3.13 Summary of Methodology

#### 3.3.14 Dispersion Modelling Approach

The effect of meteorology upon the rate of emission of asbestos containing materials from the site was performed using TAPM and CALMET. The dispersion of this material was performed using CALPUFF. All of these models are routinely used in Australia to predict the rate of dispersion of air pollutants.

#### 3.3.15 Variable Emission Rate

The rate of asbestos fibre emission across the site was not assumed to be constant, as various factors would affect the relative rates of emission, including:

- The asbestos content of the surface materials.
- The erosion-potential of the surface materials, such as the degree of surface crusting, and weathering.

A constant rate of emission was considered to be limiting the potential for asbestos containing materials giving rise to off-site impacts. This may lead to an under-evaluation of the ranking of those locations and potentially underestimate their exposure potential especially under certain meteorological conditions.

The relative rate of release of asbestos fibres from the active surfaces of the study area was predicted through the use of a constant nominal emission rate ( $1\text{g/s/m}^2$ ), an arbitrary value used only for comparison and ranking of locations, that was factored to account for:

- The asbestos content of the surface materials in each discrete area; and
- Highly crusted surfaces that would offer significant emission attenuation and mitigation.

Site specific information used in the modelling, such as asbestos content of surface materials and surface crusting was sourced from the previous study by SLR (2013a).

### 3.3.16 Meteorology

To account for the effect of variable weather patterns, meteorological observations over the period from 2001 to 2012 were used in the assessment from the following Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) monitoring stations. The BOM monitoring stations used has been set out in Table 4.

**Table 4 Bureau of Meteorology Monitoring Data used in the TAPM Modelling**

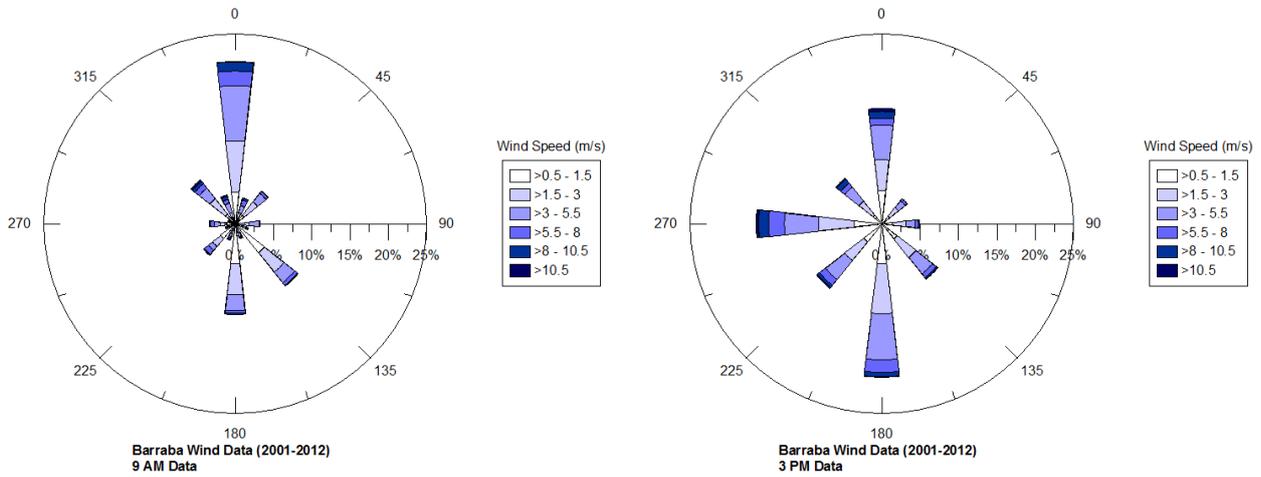
Station	Station Number	Latitude	Longitude	Height (m)	Year Opened	Status	Data Collected
Barraba Post Office	054003	-30.3781	150.6096	500	1881	Open	Surface
Narrabri Airport AWS	054038	-30.3154	149.8302	229	2001	Open	Surface
Gunnedah Resource Centre	055024	-31.0261	150.2687	307	1948	Open	Surface
Tamworth Airport AWS	055325	-31.0742	150.8362	395	1992	Open	Surface
Glen Innes AG Research Stn	056013	-29.6953	151.6936	1060	1910	Open	Surface
Inverell Research Centre	056018	-29.7752	151.0819	664	1949	Open	Surface
Armidale Airport AWS	056238	-30.5273	151.6158	1079	1993	Open	Surface

The output of the TAPM / CALMET modelling was validated against the 9am and 3pm observations at Barraba Post Office.

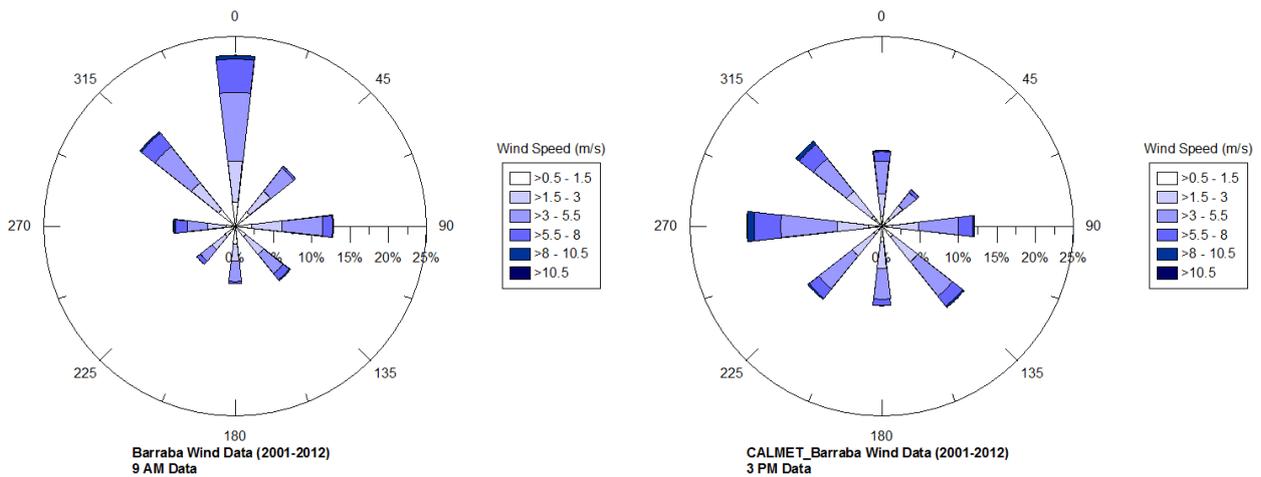
Figure 16 presents summary wind roses at 9am and 3pm for observations at Barraba Post Office for the period 2001 to 2012 and the corresponding CALMET predictions. Overall, the CALMET predictions show a good comparison with the observations.

**Figure 16 Comparison of Barraba Observations and Barraba CALMET Predictions 2001-2012**

**Barraba Post Office Observations (2001-2012)**



**Barraba Post Office CALMET Predictions (2001-2012)**



### 3.3.17 Receptors

The discrete receptors used as the key assessment locations in this study has been set out in Table 5.

**Table 5 Discrete Receptor Locations**

Modelling ID	Name	Lat	Lon	East (m)	North (m)
R1	Barraba Central Secondary School	150.6013	-30.3830	269369.57	6636401.28
R2	Barraba Primary School	150.6031	-30.3844	269776.95	6636528.21
R3	St Joseph's Primary School	150.6076	-30.3789	270144.44	6636887.49
R4	Paula Mclver	150.6585	-30.3889	274831.06	6635720.16
R5	Gossenbar	150.6861	-30.3814	277427.30	6636884.27
R6	Glenriddle Homestead	150.6896	-30.3899	277947.38	6635914.09
R7	The Nuthouse	150.6949	-30.3750	278475.46	6637858.49
R8	Ironbark Creek	150.6967	-30.4390	278848.96	6630349.71
R9	Glen Riddle Reserve	150.7093	-30.4422	278086.24	6629158.82
R10	Anglesea	150.7170	-30.3975	280407.91	6635057.99
R11	Picnic Site	150.7255	-30.4021	281265.94	6634550.12
R12	UnID Res 1	150.7333	-30.4503	282557.63	6629300.01
R13	Firview 1225	150.7345	-30.4440	282638.10	6630029.57
R14	Camping - F&F Trail	150.7404	-30.3907	281940.06	6635693.93
R15	Woodsreef Township	150.7436	-30.3899	283267.54	6635873.89
R16	Wynaroy	150.7465	-30.4051	283583.47	6634792.55
R17	Mr Burgess Property	150.7527	-30.4190	281967.68	6632711.25
R18	UnID Res 2	150.7583	-30.4801	284973.03	6625860.05
R19	Boxpark Station	150.7605	-30.3858	284994.45	6637101.62
R20	Bindaree	150.7605	-30.3858	284599.73	6636922.57
R21	Westbank 1708	150.7609	-30.4782	284163.13	6626336.45

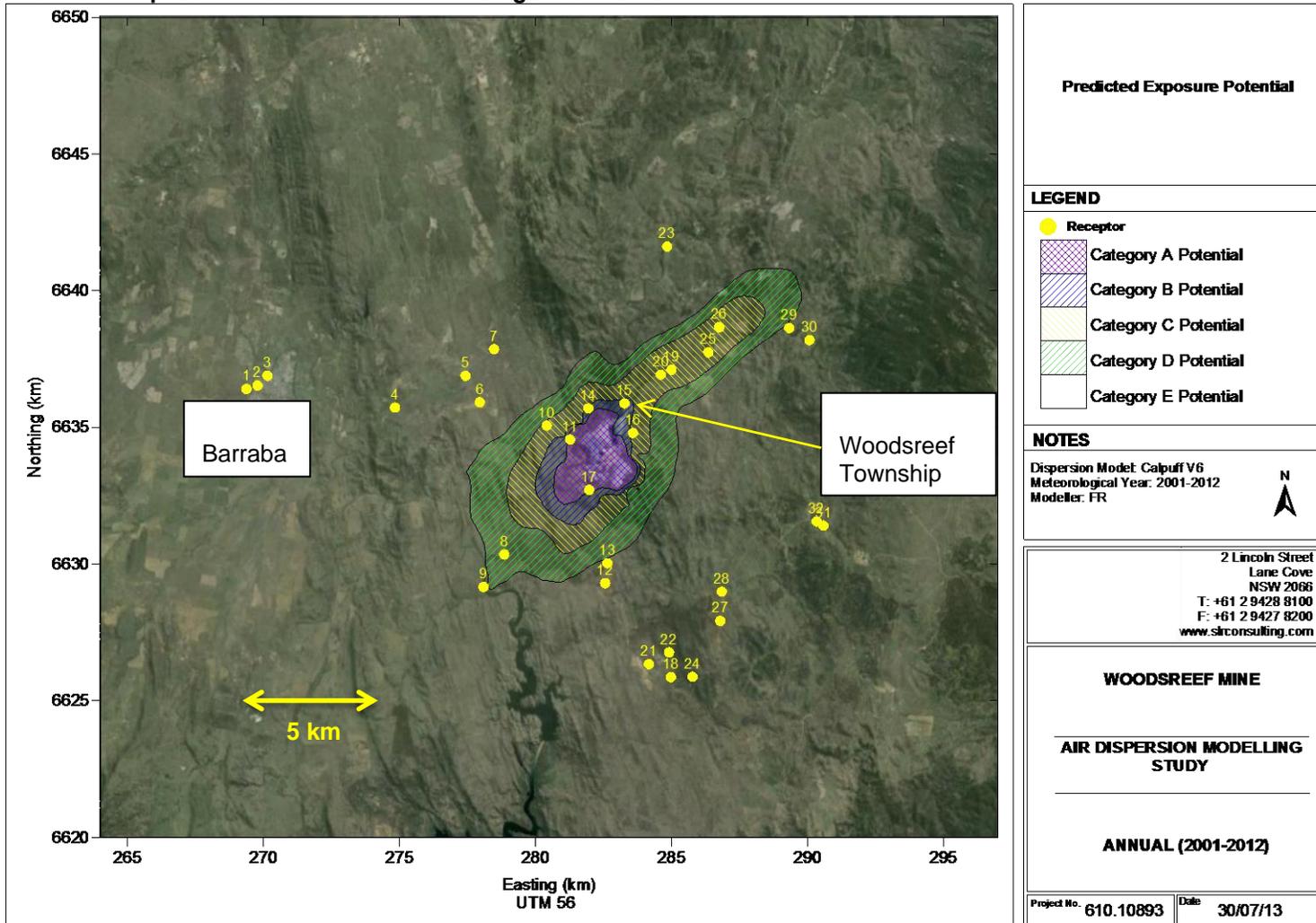
Modelling ID	Name	Lat	Lon	East (m)	North (m)
R22	Kilpara 1705	150.7609	-30.4782	284903.47	6626763.12
R23	Ironbark Station	150.7631	-30.3686	284835.49	6641613.66
R24	UnID Res Prop 1849	150.7703	-30.4822	285766.47	6625871.47
R25	Nangarah Station	150.7732	-30.3784	286351.35	6637740.63
R26	Glenview	150.7778	-30.3719	286746.18	6638658.98
R27	UnID Res Prop Removable House /Perm living	150.7781	-30.4663	286787.24	6627916.35
R28	394 /Coreena	150.7824	-30.4537	286841.79	6628987.26
R29	Rimrock	150.8071	-30.3691	289321.63	6638632.20
R30	Caernarvon	150.8156	-30.3706	290067.18	6638190.76
R31	Woonoora	150.8178	-30.4305	290581.75	6631405.14
R32	Avondale	150.8190	-30.4314	290328.31	6631555.45

### 3.3.18 Results

The annual average and seasonal predictions over the years 2001 to 2012 are presented in the following figures:

- Figure 17 Predicted Exposure Potential - Annual Average 2001 to 2012
- Figure 18 Predicted Exposure Potential – Spring 2001 to 2012
- Figure 19 Predicted Exposure Potential – Summer 2001 to 2012
- Figure 20 Predicted Exposure Potential – Autumn 2001 to 2012
- Figure 21 Predicted Exposure Potential – Winter 2001 to 2012

**Figure 17 Predicted Exposure Potential - Annual Average 2001 to 2012**



**Figure 18 Predicted Exposure Potential – Spring 2001 to 2012 (Refer to 3.3.12 for category A-E definitions)**

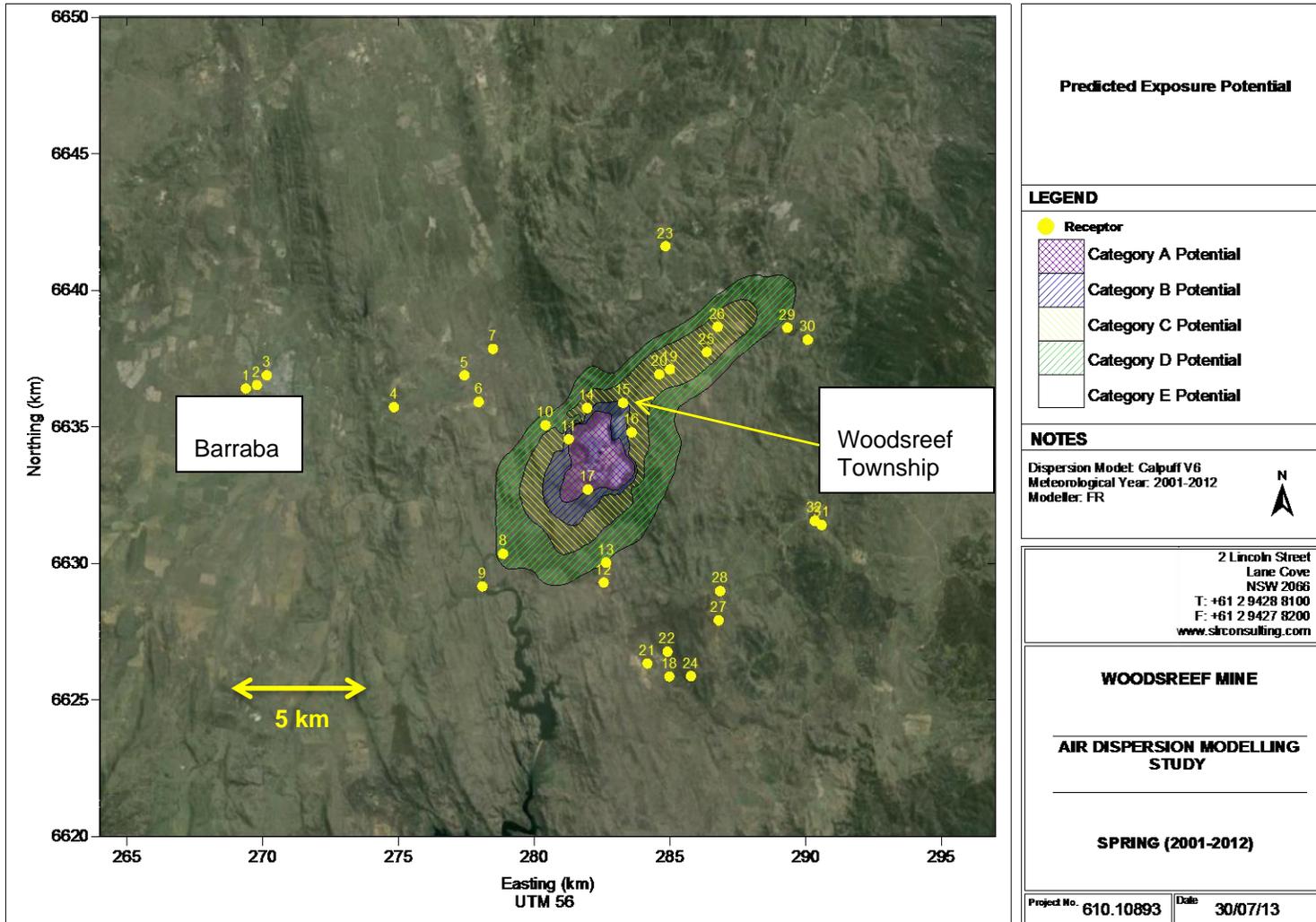
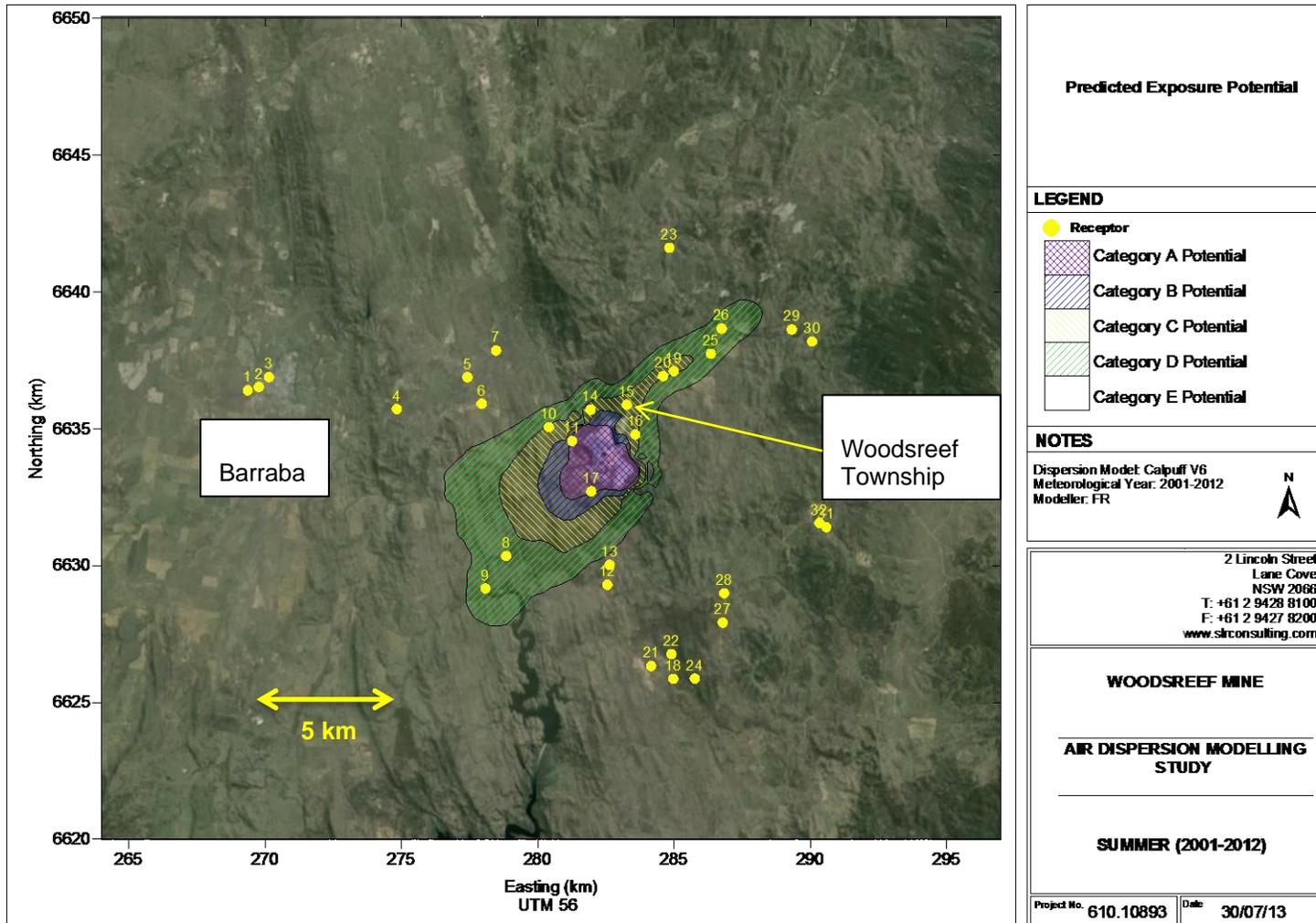


Figure 19 Predicted Exposure Potential – Summer 2001 to 2012 (Refer to 3.3.12 for category A-E definitions)



**Figure 20 Predicted Exposure Potential – Autumn 2001 to 2012 (Refer to 3.3.12 for category A-E definitions)**

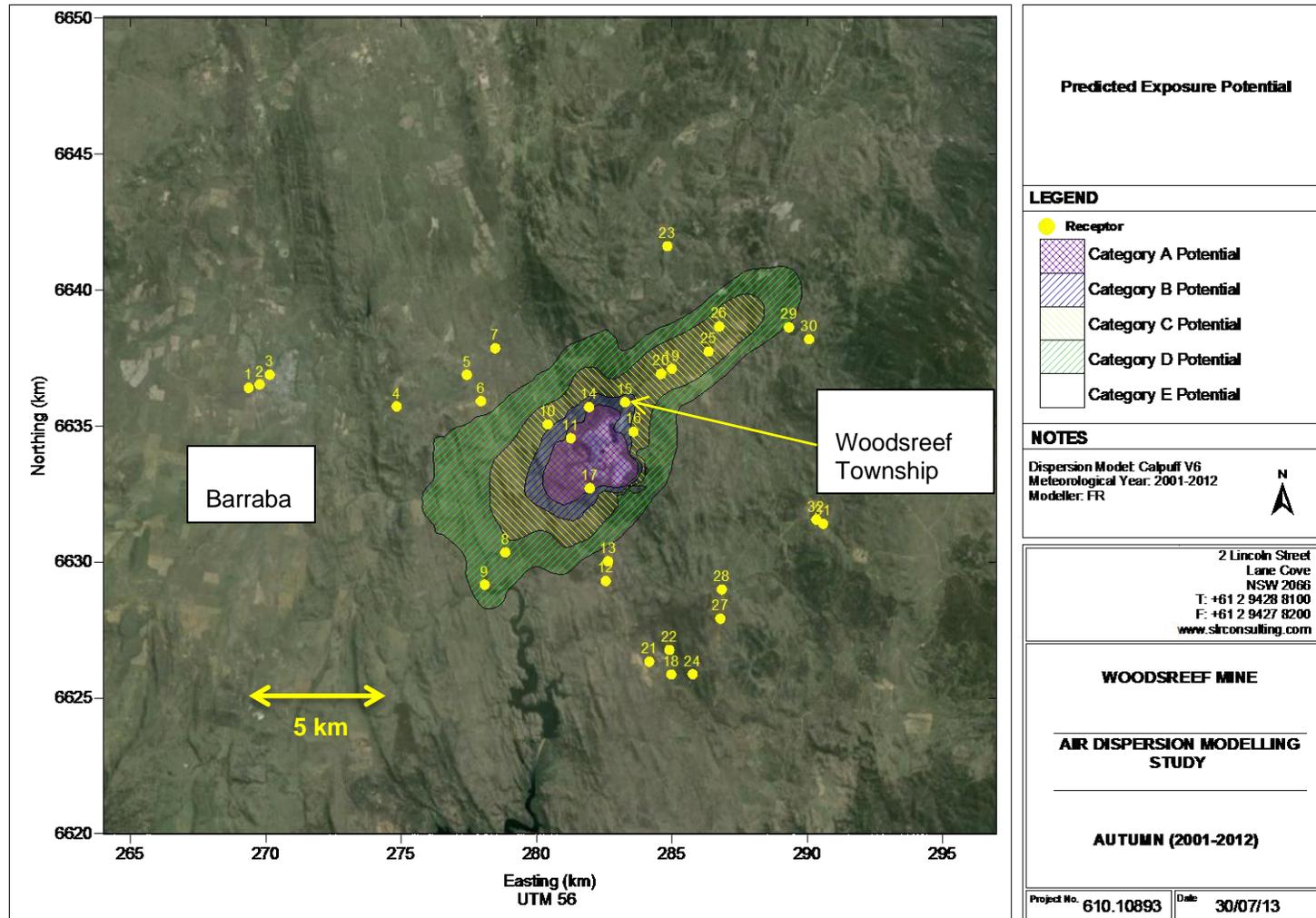
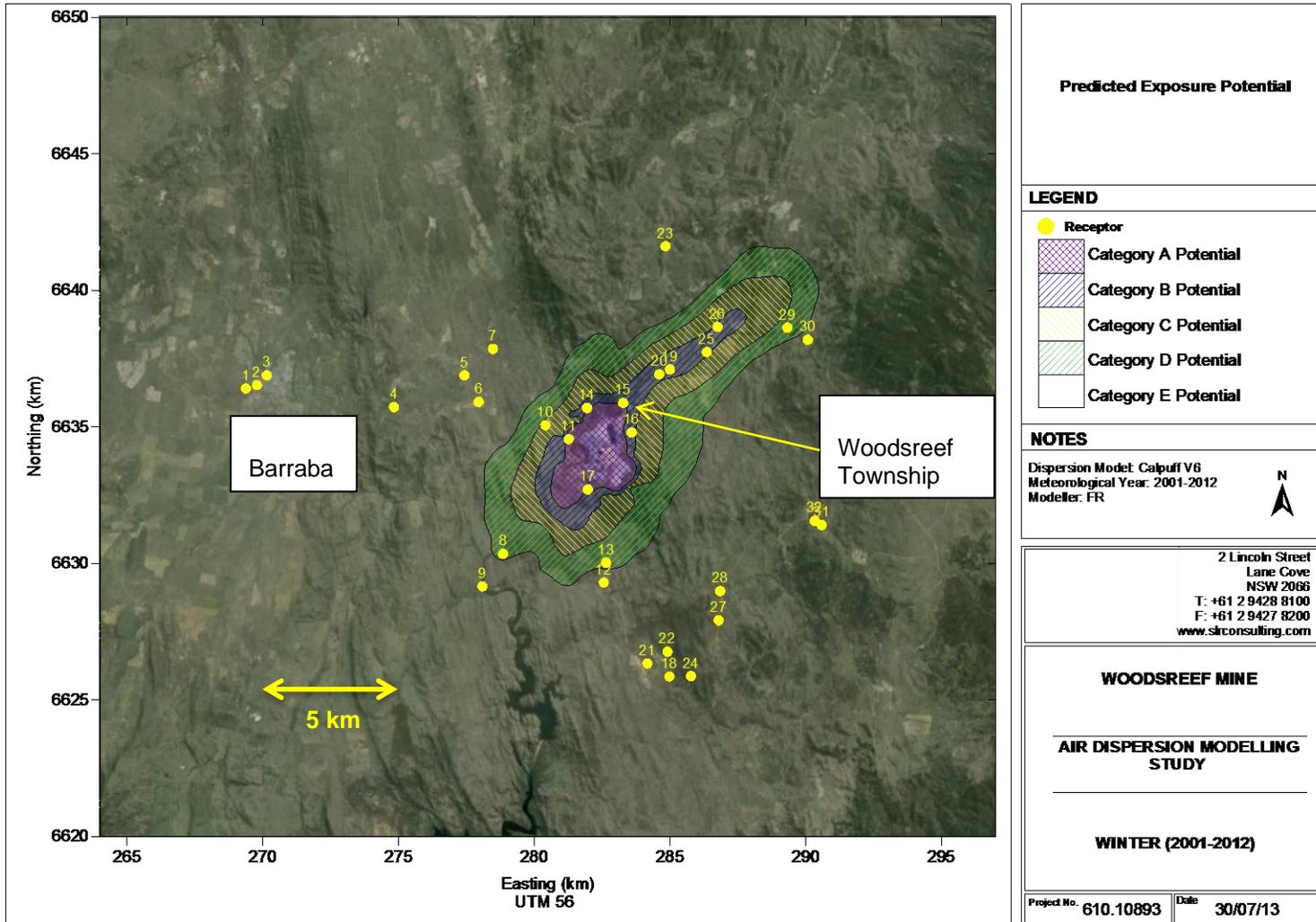


Figure 21 Predicted Exposure Potential – Winter 2001 to 2012 (Refer to 3.3.12 for category A-E definitions)



### 3.3.19 Air Monitoring Locations

Based upon the exposure potential predictions presented in Figure 17 to Figure 21, the following monitoring stations were recommended. For each season, the monitoring locations were ranked according to their predicted priority (with rank no 1 being the most recommended location) (See Table 6 below).

**Table 6 Recommended Ranked Monitoring Locations (by Season)**

Rank	Summer		Autumn		Winter		Spring	
1	R17	Mr Burgess Property	R11	Picnic Site	R17	Mr Burgess Property	R17	Mr Burgess Property
2	R11	Picnic Site	R17	Mr Burgess Property	R15	Woodsreef Township	R11	Picnic Site
3	R15	Woodsreef Township	R14	Camping - F&F Trail	R11	Picnic Site	R15	Woodsreef Township
4	R14	Camping - F&F Trail	R15	Woodsreef Township	R19	Boxpark Station	R19	Boxpark Station
5	R16	Wynaroy	R19	Boxpark Station	R14	Camping - F&F Trail	R16	Wynaroy
6	R19	Boxpark Station	R20	Bindaree	R20	Bindaree	R20	Bindaree
7	R10	Anglesea	R16	Wynaroy	R16	Wynaroy	R14	Camping - F&F Trail
8	R20	Bindaree	R10	Anglesea	R25	Nangarah Station	R25	Nangarah Station
9	R25	Nangarah Station	R25	Nangarah Station	R26	Glenview	R26	Glenview
10	R26	Glenview	R26	Glenview	R10	Anglesea	R10	Anglesea

The final locations chosen for airborne asbestos fibre monitoring were based on the recommended monitoring stations and advice from the Woodsreef Taskforce following consultation with Barraba community. The list of air monitoring stations has been set out in Table 7.

**Table 7 Air Monitoring Locations**

Air Monitoring Location		
1	-	Control – Residence in Tamworth
2	-	Barraba Primary School, Mower (Cricket Nets)
3	R9	Glenn Riddle Reserve
4	R19	Boxpark Station
5	R16	Wynaroy
6	R14	Camping - F&F Trail
7	R15	Woodsreef Township (Church)
8	R11	Picnic Site
9	R17	Mr Burgess Property

### 3.3.20 Contemporary Airborne Asbestos Fibre Monitoring

Two air monitoring activities were conducted by SLR in 2013. These were classed as Background Monitoring and Activity Based Monitoring. Monitoring methodology was as per *NOHSC:3003(2005) Guidance Note on the Membrane Filter Method for Estimating Airborne Asbestos Fibres 2nd edition*.

Background airborne asbestos fibre monitoring was conducted at locations set out in Table 7 above. Six rounds of monitoring were conducted by SLR from 14 November 2013 to 14 December 2013.

Results of the Background Air Monitoring at all locations over each round of monitoring by SLR indicated that airborne asbestos fibre concentrations were at levels less than 0.01 fibres per mL of air. That is to say the airborne asbestos fibre concentrations were less than the detection limit of the approved method (NOHSC:3003(2005))

The airborne asbestos fibre reports for the background monitoring conducted by SLR from 14 November 2013 to 14 December 2013 have been set out below in Table 8 and in Appendix B.

**Table 8 Air Monitoring Locations**

Air Monitoring Location			Date of Monitoring & Airborne Asbestos Fibre Concentrations (fibres/mL)					
			14/11/13	20/11/13	26/11/13	2/12/13	8/12/13	14/12/13
1	-	Control – Residence in Tamworth	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
2	-	Barraba Primary School, Mower (Cricket Nets)	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
3	R9	Glenn Riddle Reserve	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
4	R19	Boxpark Station	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
5	R16	Wynaroy	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
6	R14	Camping - F&F Trail	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
7	R15	Woodsreef Township (Church)	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
8	R11	Picnic Site	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
9	R17	Mr Burgess Property	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	Sample rejected*	<0.01	<0.01

Note \* Sample rejected due to technical issue with sampling error.

Activity Based Monitoring was conducted at locations near the mine site from 9 December 2013 to 12 December 2013. In this monitoring SLR Consultants conducted a range of activities whilst wearing personal monitors. The activities were chosen to represent typical recreational pastimes conducted near the mine site. These activities included the following:

- Fossicking
- Camping (two locations)
- Bird Watching
- Walking the Flora Trail (near The Mine Road)
- Viewing the mine from various observation points off the Bundarra – Barraba Road
- Walking along the Bundarra – Barraba Road.

Results of the Activity Based Monitoring for each activity conducted by SLR indicated that airborne asbestos fibre concentrations were at levels less than 0.01 fibres per mL of air. That is to say the airborne asbestos fibre concentrations were less than the detection limit of the approved method (NOHSC:3003(2005)).

The airborne asbestos fibre concentrations for the activity based monitoring conducted by SLR in December 2013 have been set out below in Table 9.

For both Background and Activity Based monitoring all airborne asbestos fibre concentrations were below the detection limit of the methodology. To put this concentration in context, at the time of writing the SafeWork Australia Exposure Standard for asbestos is 0.1 fibres per mL of air. Therefore the likely concentrations of airborne asbestos during the monitoring period were at least ten times lower than the current occupational exposure limit.

**Table 9 Activity Based Airborne Asbestos Fibre Monitoring 2014**

Activity	Date	Number of Samples	Concentrations (fibres/mL)
Fossicking	9/12/13	3	All < 0.01
Camping – Iron Bark Camping Area, near Pumping Station	11/12/13	3	All < 0.01
Camping – Iron Bark Camping Area, north of Bundarra – Barrabra Rd, 1km north of mine	10/12/13	3	All < 0.01
Bird Watching	9/12/13	3	All < 0.01
Walking the Flora Trail	11/12/13	2	All < 0.01
Viewing the mine from various observation points off the Bundarra – Barraba Road	12/12/13	3	All < 0.01
Walking along the Bundarra – Barraba Road, near the mine	10/12/13	3	All < 0.01

### 3.3.21 Historic Airborne Asbestos Fibre Monitoring

A review of available data indicated that airborne asbestos fibre monitoring had been undertaken a number of times between 1992 and 2012. Monitoring occurred either off mine site as background monitoring or on the mine site as part of monitoring during site works either during remediation works.

The majority of the monitoring between 1992 to 2012, indicated that airborne asbestos fibre concentrations were at levels less than 0.01 fibres per mL of air. That is concentrations were below the detection limit of the methodology. As previously stated the likely concentrations of airborne asbestos during the monitoring period were at least ten times lower than the current occupational exposure limit.

The exceptions occurred during three periods, each time during remediation works on the mine site and at monitoring locations on the mine site only. In these cases the airborne asbestos fibre concentrations were in the range of 0.04 to 0.06 fibres per mL of air. The indicative approximation of samples above the detection limit was 1 sample above the detection limit per 140 samples taken on the mine site.

Dames & Moore (1997) reported that in 1992 monitoring conducted by the NSW Department of Mineral Resources for personnel conducting rehabilitation works on the Woodsreef tailings dump recorded airborne asbestos fibre concentrations in the range of 0.01 to 0.04 fibres per mL air. The second instance occurred during the 2009 remediation of the Mill Building, where monitoring on one day (12 October 2009) at one monitoring location on the mine site recorded airborne fibre concentrations of 0.06 fibres per mL of air. However this elevated reading can be explained by the monitor location and activity at the time. The monitor was located at the “clean end of decontamination unit” and the report authors commented that the elevated concentration was due to a clothes drier being operated in the vicinity of the monitor.

In the third instance during the 2012 building of the Bat Habitat, monitoring on one day (13 September 2012) at one monitoring location on the mine site recorded airborne fibre concentrations of 0.04 fibres per mL of air. This elevated reading can be explained by the monitor location and activity at the time. The monitor was located on the “Exterior of Mini Excavator” and presumably the Mini Excavator was used to dig trenches for placement of large pipes used for the Bat Habitat.

Details of the airborne asbestos fibre monitoring undertaken intermittently between 1992 and 2013 has been set out below in Table 10.

**Table 10 Historic Airborne Asbestos Fibre Monitoring 1992 to 2013**

Date	Activity	Number of Samples	Concentrations	Source	
1992	Dates not provided	Monitoring of personnel during remediation works on the tailings dump using heavy machinery	Not Provided	0.01 – 0.04 fibres / ml	Dames & Moore, 1997
2000	26 May - 22 June	Monitoring a combination of properties adjacent to the mine and locations on the mine site			
		Monitoring of properties adjacent to the mine, Wynaroy, Anglesey, Connors Creek	24	All < 0.01 fibres/ml	HLA, 2000
		Monitoring locations on the mine site	61	All < 0.01 fibres/ml	HLA, 2000
2004	20 October – 4 November	Monitoring of remediation works on mine site	130	All < 0.01 fibres/ml	HLA, 2004
2009	6 October – 15 October	Monitoring of remediation works on mine site	51	Majority samples < 0.01 fibres/ml <b>One sample 0.06 fibres/ml</b>	AECOM, 2009
2011	14 September & 24 November	Monitoring during geotechnical survey of mine site	9	All < 0.01 fibres/ml	HAZMAT Service, 2011
2012	19 June	Background monitoring of mine site, included Woodsreef Church, Wynaroy, Mine Gate, 2 km South of mine gate & Fossicking area north west of mine	5	All < 0.01 fibres/ml	HAZMAT Service, 2012a

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Number of Samples</b>	<b>Concentrations</b>	<b>Source</b>
<b>2012</b> 20 June – 21 June	Occupational monitoring on mine site during drainage assessment works	6	All < 0.01 fibres/ml	HAZMAT Service, 2012b
<b>2012</b> 20 June – 21 June	Monitoring of mine site, near mine boundary during drainage assessment works	9	All < 0.01 fibres/ml	HAZMAT Service, 2012c
<b>2012</b> 20 June – 21 June	Monitoring of mine site, near mine boundary and equipment used during building of bat habitat works	17	Majority samples < 0.01 fibres/ml <b>One sample 0.04 fibres/ml</b>	HAZMAT Service, 2012d
<b>2013</b> 14 November - 14 December	Background monitoring of locations of the mine site including Barraba and Tamworth control site	48	All < 0.01 fibres/ml	SLR, 2013 (see Appendix A of this report)
<b>2013</b> 9 December - 12 December	Activity Based Personal monitoring in the vicinity of the mine including : Fossicking, Camping (two locations), Picnicking, Bird Watching, Walking the Flora Trail, viewing the mine from various observation points off the Bundarra – Barraba Road, walking along the Bundarra – Barraba Road	20	All < 0.01 fibres/ml	SLR, 2013c

In 1974 “dust sampling” was undertaken at properties in the vicinity of the mine. This sampling appears to be of settled dust. Therefore the results were used in a general way to infer airborne transport of asbestos onto the properties with the underlying assumptions that the source of asbestos was the active processes occurring at the mine. Furthermore the available sources quoting the original works only give qualitative estimations of the amounts of asbestos dust observed. Therefore this information may be useful in providing some evidence of how airborne asbestos may have been transported in terms of direction and distance during previous mine operations. This information is of limited value to the current study due to the asbestos source being active mining processes rather than the effects of natural forces on the derelict mine. However the information has been included below as part of the historic record.

Dames & Moore (1997) quoted from Stewart (1985) that “*Settled dust containing chrysotile was found in very low levels as far as “Black Mountain” (8.5 km) to the southeast of the Mill. Relatively high levels were found at “Fernview” (4 km) to the south and moderate levels at “Box Park” (4 km) to the northeast. Low levels were found at the township of Woodsreef (2 km) to the northeast. The 1974 sampling came only two years after the mine began operation and therefore asbestos levels in neighbouring properties would most likely be attributed to the dispersion of chrysotile fibres from the dryer stack on the Mill only, rather than the tailings dump.*”

### 3.3.22 Key Points – Asbestos & Air Quality

- There is historic and contemporary air monitoring data available of airborne asbestos fibre concentration in areas surrounding the mine, from 1992 to 2013.
- Settled dust sampling in 1974 found chrysotile deposited at distances up to 8.5 km from the mine. The authors considered the chrysotile was from the mill operations and not the Tailings dump.
- Air modelling based on 1992 data suggested that during high wind velocities (up to 10 m/s) downwind airborne asbestos concentrations would decline by 70% within 5km of the tailings dump and by 90% beyond 15 km from the tailings dump.
- Air dispersion modelling based on data from 2001 to 2012 suggested that areas adjacent to the mine site with the highest potential for exposure lie in a footprint running southwest from the mine site for a distance of approximately 5km, to the north east of the mine site for a distance of approximately 10 km and width of approximately 3km to 5km.
- Air modelling based on the 2013 SLR report suggests that downwind airborne asbestos concentrations would decline by 80% within 5km of the mine.
- Air modelling was used to guide the selection of locations for airborne asbestos fibre monitoring in contemporary air monitoring.
- Historic air monitoring data is available from 1992 to 2012. The number of samples collected in 1992 is unclear. Dames & Moore (1997) stated that during the 1992 remediation works on the Tailings Dump, personal air monitors recorded concentrations in the range of less than 0.01 fibres per mL air to 0.04 fibres per mL air. Air monitoring from 2000 to 2012 included 312 samples of which the overwhelming majority of samples, that is 310 samples, recorded airborne asbestos fibre concentrations of less than 0.01 fibres per mL air. The exceptions were two samples taken on the mine site during onsite works. The first exception occurred in 2009 with one sample recording an onsite airborne asbestos fibre concentration of 0.06 fibres per mL air. The second exception occurred in 2012 with one sample recording an onsite airborne asbestos fibre concentration of 0.04 fibres per mL.

- In the present study, background airborne asbestos monitoring recorded airborne asbestos fibre concentrations at all locations as less than 0.01 fibres per mL air. Monitoring locations were situated within the area with the predicted highest potential for exposure at distances ranging from 100 metres to 5 km approximately from the mine, at Barraba Township and a control location at Tamworth.
- Activity Based Monitoring conducted at locations near the mine site in December 2013. The activities were chosen to represent typical recreational pastimes conducted near the mine site. These activities included the following: Fossicking, Camping (two locations), Bird Watching, Walking the Flora Trail, Viewing the mine from various observation points off the Bundarra - Barraba Road, Walking along the Bundarra - Barraba Road.
- Activity Based Monitoring near the mine site included 20 samples with recorded airborne asbestos fibre concentrations during all activities of less than 0.01 fibres per mL air. That is below the detection limit of the method.
- Airborne asbestos fibres are only becoming airborne at detectable concentrations when there is a physical disturbance on the mine site itself.
- Furthermore detectable concentrations of airborne asbestos fibres have not been recorded outside the mine site in the surrounding communities and locations.
- Airborne asbestos fibre concentrations above 0.01 fibres per mL air, that is the detection limit of the method, have only been recorded during three periods, 1992 (0.04 fibres per mL, sample numbers unknown), 2006 (1 sample, 0.06 fibres per mL) and 2012 (1 sample, 0.04 fibres per mL). These occurred when remediation activities have been occurring on the mine site and only at sampling locations on the mine site itself.

### 3.4 Issue Identification Summary

The main issues identified relating to asbestos and the local populations are the following:

- The largest community in proximity to the mine is the town of Barraba with approximately 1,150 people usually residing in town which is located approximately 12 km to the west of the mine. Closer to the mine is the state suburb area of Woodsreef with population of approximately 134 people.
- The lands adjacent to the mine and between the mine site and the town of Barraba are rural in nature and only lightly populated.
- Recreational activities, both passive and active are undertaken in areas ranging from adjacent to the mine to areas up to 4km from the mine.
- Recreational activities, both passive and active are undertaken by local residents and tourists to the area.
- The mine site is approximately 290 hectares in size and is reported to contain a 75 million tonne waste rock dump and 25 million tonne tailings dump.
- Water drainage on the mine site shows drainage flows both back on to the mine site and flows off the mine site.
- The potential for natural processes, such as rain and wind, to transport materials from the mine site to areas outside the mine boundary will be a major factor in determining the likelihood of the general public being exposed to asbestos from the mine.

- Potential asbestos hazards coupled with the transport of materials will be dependent on three main factors. This includes whether asbestos present in the material, how much asbestos is present in the material and in what form is the asbestos.
- Materials that pose the highest potential hazard to exposed humans will be materials with relatively high asbestos content and with the asbestos fibres present in the respirable size range.
- There is evidence of historic and current erosion and migration of materials within the mine site and off the mine site in many areas of the mine.
- The migration of materials is likely to be intermittent in nature and linked to significant events such as heavy rain or the localised catastrophic collapse of previously stable surface crusts or materials
- There is significant asbestos contamination across most if not all of the mine site and adjacent lands.
- The concentrations of asbestos in the particle size fraction less than 2 mm in diameter of material across the site varied greatly from less than 0.1% to 95% (vol/vol).
- Respirable asbestos fibres were present in soils across most of the mine site and adjacent lands.
- Asbestos containing material has been transported from the mine site into Ironbark Creek over the years.
- The amount of asbestos transported from the mine site into Ironbark Creek is unclear.
- Asbestos in the Ironbark Creek system would settle out in areas of low flow, becoming buried over time by incoming sediments
- Asbestos in Ironbark Creek sediment will occasionally be resuspended and transported with the general sediments during periods of sediment disturbances such as during flooding events.
- If asbestos has been transported into Split Rock Reservoir it would be expected to settle out into the reservoir sediments and be buried over time by natural sedimentation processes. Once buried the asbestos should have little or no impact on the environment or end-users of the reservoir water.
- There is data available of airborne asbestos fibre concentrations in areas surrounding the mine.
- Settled dust sampling in 1974 found chrysotile deposited at distances up to 8.5km from the mine. The authors considered the chrysotile was from the mill operations and not the Tailings dump.
- Air modelling based on 1992 data suggested that during high wind velocities (up to 10 m/s) downwind airborne asbestos concentrations would decline by 70% within 5km of the tailings dump and by 90% beyond 15km from the tailings dump.
- Air dispersion modelling based on data from 2001 to 2012 suggested that areas adjacent to the mine site with the highest potential for exposure lie in a footprint running southwest from the mine site for a distance of approximately 5 km, to the north east of the mine site for a distance of approximately 10 km and width of approximately 3km to 5km.

- Air modelling based on the 2013 SLR report suggests that downwind airborne asbestos concentrations would decline by 80% within 5km of the mine.
- Historic air monitoring data is available from 1992 to 2012. The number of samples collected in 1992 is unclear. Dames & Moore (1997) stated that during the 1992 remediation works on the Tailings Dump, personal air monitors recorded concentrations in the range of less than 0.01 fibres per mL air to 0.04 fibres per mL air. Air monitoring from 2000 to 2012 included 312 samples of which the overwhelming majority of samples, that is 310 samples, recorded airborne asbestos fibre concentrations of less than 0.01 fibres per mL air. The exceptions were two samples taken on the mine site during onsite works. The first exception occurred in 2009 with one sample recording an onsite airborne asbestos fibre concentration of 0.06 fibres per mL air. The second exception occurred in 2012 with one sample recording an onsite airborne asbestos fibre concentration of 0.04 fibres per mL.
- In the present study, background airborne asbestos monitoring in 2013 included 48 samples all of which recorded airborne asbestos fibre concentrations at all locations as less than 0.01 fibres per mL air. Monitoring locations were situated within the area with the predicted highest potential for exposure at distances ranging from 100 metres to 5 km approximately from the mine, at Barraba Township and a control location at Tamworth.
- Activity Based Monitoring conducted at locations near the mine site in December 2013 included 20 samples all of which recorded airborne asbestos fibre concentrations that were less than 0.01 fibres per mL air during all activities tested.
- Airborne asbestos fibres are only becoming airborne at detectable concentrations when there is a physical disturbance on the mine site itself.
- Furthermore detectable concentrations of airborne asbestos fibres have not been recorded outside the mine site in the surrounding communities and locations.
- Airborne asbestos fibre concentrations above 0.01 fibres per mL air, that is the detection limit of the method, have only been recorded during three periods, 1992 (0.04 fibres per mL, sample numbers unknown), 2006 (1 sample, 0.06 fibres per mL) and 2012 (1 sample, 0.04 fibres per mL). These occurred when remediation activities have been occurring on the mine site and only at sampling locations on the mine site itself.

### **3.5 Toxicity Assessment**

All types of asbestos are carcinogenic, and it is acknowledged that there is some debate that amphibole type asbestos is more potent in causing mesotheliomas than the serpentine type (chrysotile). However, both types can cause mesotheliomas and are believed to be equally potent in causing lung cancer (*ATSDR, 2001*).

#### **3.5.1 Summary of Diseases**

Asbestos primarily affects the respiratory system. There is no clear evidence of asbestos causing disease through ingestion such as may occur through eating or drinking asbestos contaminated foodstuff or water.

Asbestos related disease can occur as a result of either high exposure to airborne asbestos fibres for a short time or lower exposure over longer periods of time. There are three primary disease associated with the inhalation of asbestos fibres. These are:

- Asbestosis
- Lung Cancer

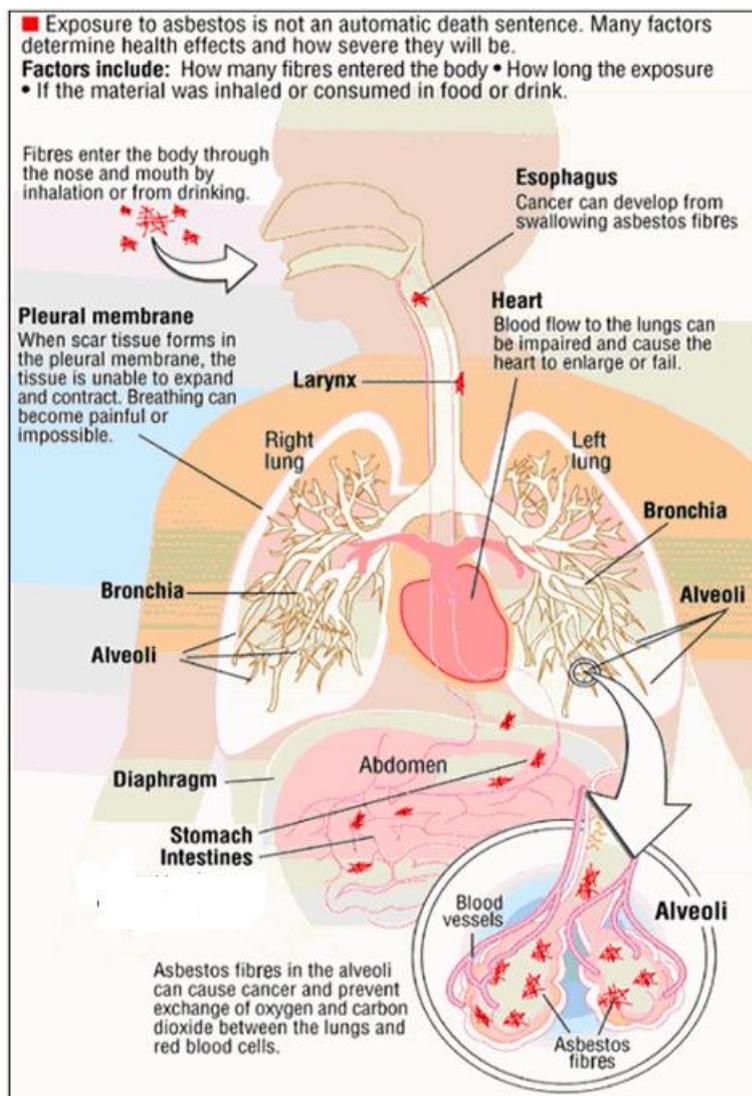
- Mesothelioma

These diseases have been reviewed extensively and a brief summary has been provided in Appendix C. Asbestosis and lung cancer are associated primarily with high level occupational exposures. Mesothelioma has been associated with exposures below those causing asbestosis and increased risk of lung cancer. Mesothelioma is considered to be the critical effect endpoint for inhalation exposure to asbestos fibres for the purpose of this study. (*SafeWork Australia, 2010*)

All asbestos-related diseases are dose-related: the higher the concentration and duration of exposure, the higher the prevalence of the disease and mortality. However, the form of the dose-response curve at low doses, typical for the exposure of general population, is not known. There are contradictory opinions as to whether the dose-response relationship in the region of low doses is linear or not. It is difficult to measure the effects at such low doses either epidemiologically or experimentally.

The asbestos exposure routes and sites of impact in the human body can be seen below in Figure 22.

**Figure 22 Asbestos Exposure Routes and Impact Sites in the Human Body**  
(modified from Worksafe NZ, 2015)



## **3.6 Exposure Assessment**

In general, an exposure assessment aims to provide the magnitude, frequency, extent, character and duration of exposures to a chemical or material of concern, in this case asbestos. An exposure assessment also aims to identify human populations or groups who may be exposed and potential exposure pathways, which in this case is inhalation.

### **3.6.1 Exposure Pathways and Receptors**

An exposure pathway describes the mechanism by which personnel may be exposed to asbestos fibres originating from the Woodsreef Mine. Each exposure pathway must include a source of fibres, mechanism for release of the fibres and a mechanism for fibres to enter the breathing zone. The exposure pathway is incomplete if any of these factors are not present, and therefore no additional risks are associated with that activity.

#### **Receptors**

Receptors are similar groups of people from the defined communities. In this assessment, receptors are considered to be individuals who usually reside in the Barraba Township, individuals living in close proximity to the mine, and transient observers who may be in close proximity to the mine. For the purposes of this study a nominal 5km cut off distance has been determined based on available air modelling Dames & Moore (1997) and SLR (2013b)

For the purposes of this report, members of the communities have been classified into seven (7) exposure categories and a Control group as set out in Table 11.

**Table 11 Community Exposure Groupings – Receptors**

<b>Exposure Group</b>	
<b>Control Group 0 – Tamworth Residential</b>	Population living approximately 85 km distance from the mine
<b>Exposure Group 1 – Barraba Residents</b>	Population in Barraba and 2km from Barraba centre, approximately 15 km distance from mine
<b>Exposure Group 2 – Barraba Special Populations</b>	Special population subgroup within community who may be a greater risk of adverse health impacts due to factors such as age or ill health. Includes population under 18 years of age, elderly and infirm
<b>Exposure Group 3 – Rural Residents 5 km to 13 km from Mine</b>	Population living in between 5km from the mine and 2 km from Barraba (approximately 5 km to 13 km distance from mine)
<b>Exposure Group 4 – Woodsreef Residents</b>	Population living in close proximity to the mine, up to approximately 5 km distance from mine
<b>Exposure Group 5 – Woodsreef Special Populations</b>	Special population subgroup within community who may be a greater risk of adverse health impacts due to factors such as age or ill health. Includes population under 18 years of age, elderly and infirm
<b>Exposure Group 6 – Passive Recreation within 5 km of Mine</b>	Transient observers (general public and visitors) undertaking passive recreational activities (i.e. little or no disturbance of soil and vegetation) in close proximity to the mine, up to approximately 5 km distance from the mine
<b>Exposure Group 7 – Active Recreation within 5 km of Mine</b>	Transient observers (general public and visitors) undertaking active recreational activities (i.e. potential for some disturbance of soil and vegetation) in close proximity to the mine, up to approximately 5 km distance from the mine

### **Source of Asbestos Fibres**

The original source of asbestos fibres in the current study is the processed materials on the mine site. However there are also sources of asbestos that have been transported by the forces of nature from the mine site to areas adjacent to the mine site. It is acknowledged that naturally occurring sources of asbestos are also present in the general area however it is probable that the main bioavailable source of asbestos is overwhelmingly from the mine site.

### **Notional Mechanism for Release of Fibres**

The mechanisms responsible for the release of fibres are many and varied but can be defined in two broad groupings. The first being the release of fibres through natural forces, such as wind, rain, erosion etc, and the second grouping being the release of fibres through man made forces, such as persons disturbing the soil/ground.

There is evidence of current erosion and migration of materials within the mine site and off the mine site. The migration of materials and subsequent release of asbestos fibres is likely to be intermittent in nature and linked to significant events such as heavy rain or the localised catastrophic collapse of sections of the material such as occurs when water causes erosion to undermine areas leading to collapse of previously stable crusts or materials (*SLR, 2103a*).

Release of the asbestos fibres through man made forces is in general not currently occurring on the mine site. The exception to this may occur when trespassers enter the mine site or if future remediation works are undertaken. However man made forces may be disturbing soil containing asbestos fibres in areas where the asbestos fibres have initially been transported off site by natural forces and deposited on lands adjacent to the mine. Examples of soil disturbance off the mine site range from small scale such as a recreational camper or a vehicle disturbing the soil to large scale such as digging up areas for roads works or removal of drainage sediments.

### **Mechanism for Fibres to Enter the Breathing Zone**

Once asbestos fibres have been released then air movement is required for asbestos fibres to enter the breathing zone of a person. This will entail two broad scenarios:

- Air movement will transport airborne fibres over significant distances ranging from hundreds of metres to kilometres (Scenario 1).
- Air movement transporting fibres over limited distances such as metres (Scenario 2).

In Scenario 1, the receptors may be at a distance from the mine and disturbed fibres have to be carried by winds for significant distances. During this distribution the concentrations of airborne asbestos fibres will be diluted from the original fibre suspension from the soil as the winds take the fibres away from the mine site. It is conceivable under the right atmospheric conditions that airborne asbestos fibres may reach receptors at distance from the mine, such as Exposure Group 1 – ‘Barraba Residents’, however the concentration of fibres the receptor may receive in their breathing zone should be significantly diluted compared to the initial airborne fibre concentrations near the mine.

An alternative Scenario 1 example may a receptor closer to the asbestos source and hence potentially exposed to the higher initial concentrations of airborne fibres before limited diluted in the general air movement. Exposure Group 6 ‘Passive Recreation’ near the mine is an example where people viewing the mine from the mine boundary or picnicking in close proximity to the mine, are potentially exposed to the higher airborne fibres concentrations associated with the initial disturbance.

In Scenario 2, the receptors are very close to the original source of the asbestos when fibres become airborne. The distance from the source of airborne fibres may less than one metre. The mechanism for the release of fibres may also be due the activities of the receptor disturbing the asbestos source. These receptors are likely to be potentially exposed to higher concentrations than those in the scenario 1 due to their proximity to the asbestos source. However the exposure may be of a shorter time period as the airborne fibres disperse into the surrounding air.

Exposure Group 7 ‘Active Recreation’ may be exposed to asbestos fibres entering their breathing zone in this manner.

### 3.6.2 Assessment of Exposure Concentrations

The exposure concentrations for the current study were based on results of historic air monitoring at the mine site and recent monitoring by SLR as set out above in 3.3.22.

It appears that for all Exposure Groups the background airborne asbestos fibre concentrations they may be routinely exposed is likely to be less than 0.01 fibres per mL of air. This was based on the review of all available airborne asbestos fibre monitoring from 1992 to 2013 and related information such as air quality modelling. All monitoring data from locations off the mine site have recorded airborne asbestos fibre concentrations of less than 0.01 fibres per mL of air.

Airborne asbestos fibre concentrations above 0.01 fibres per mL of air have only been recorded at sampling locations on the mine site itself and only when remediation activities have been occurring on the mine site. This data fits the assumption that asbestos fibres mainly become airborne during intermittent physical disturbance to the asbestos containing source material. Examples of physical disturbance may be caused by natural forces of erosion or manmade disturbance through remediation works, driving along the now closed section of The Mine Road or recreational activities that disturb the ground structure.

In 1992 monitoring of personnel conducting rehabilitation works using heavy equipment on the Woodsreef tailings dump recorded airborne asbestos fibre concentrations in the range of 0.01 to 0.04 fibres per mL of air (*Dames & Moore, 1997*). The tailings can be considered an area of high asbestos content with a high percentage of respirable size asbestos fibres present in the material, based on current and historic studies as set out in section 3.3.7. Therefore the tailings are in an area where physical disturbance can relatively easily create airborne asbestos fibres. For the purposes of estimating receptor exposure airborne fibre concentrations, the concentration of 0.04 fibres per mL of air recorded during the tailings rehabilitation works may be used to represent airborne concentrations generated by short term physical disturbance on the mine site.

It appears likely that a large percentage of airborne fibres initially generated from the mine, settled back to ground within 5km of the mine site. Modelling of airborne asbestos fibres deposition by both *Dames & Moore (1997)* and *SLR (2013b)* estimated that downwind airborne asbestos concentrations would decline by 70% or 80% within 5km of the mine.

However the actual distance airborne asbestos fibres generated on the mine site travel before deposition has to date not been verified by field measurements of airborne asbestos fibres. As stated above, all monitoring data from locations off the mine site have recorded airborne asbestos fibre concentrations of less than 0.01 fibres per mL of air.

Therefore the estimated background exposure concentrations associated with the mine site are likely to be less than 0.01 fibres per mL of air which is not distinguishable from the background at the control site of Tamworth. The estimated background exposure concentrations have been set out in Table 12.

**Table 12 Community Exposure Groupings –Estimated Background Exposure Concentrations (no disturbance on mine)**

<b>Exposure Group</b>	<b>Estimated Background Exposure Concentrations (asbestos fibres/mL air)</b>
<b>Control Group 0 – Tamworth Residential</b>	< 0.01
<b>Exposure Group 1 – Barraba Residents</b>	< 0.01
<b>Exposure Group 2 – Barraba Special Populations</b>	< 0.01
<b>Exposure Group 3 – Rural Residents 5 km to 13 km from Mine</b>	< 0.01
<b>Exposure Group 4 – Woodsreef Residents</b>	< 0.01
<b>Exposure Group 5 – Woodsreef Special Populations</b>	< 0.01
<b>Exposure Group 6 – Passive Recreation within 5 km of Mine</b>	< 0.01
<b>Exposure Group 7 – Active Recreation within 5 km of Mine</b>	< 0.01

It should be prudent to consider that Exposure Group 7 (Active Recreation within 5km of the mine) may be potentially exposed to localised elevated airborne asbestos concentrations over short time periods, generated by their activities which cause physical disturbance to asbestos containing soils, for example trail bike riding around Iron Bark Creek.

Persons in close proximity to the mine site, such as Woodsreef Residents and persons undertaking recreation activities near the mine (Exposure Groups 4, 5, 6 & 7) may be in close proximity to the asbestos source during the initial disturbance. Asbestos fibre concentrations that persons may be intermittently exposed to are difficult to estimate; however those in closer proximity to a disturbance are more likely to have greater exposure. The only study that attempted to simulate Active Recreation exposure, the activity based air monitoring conducted by SLR in 2013, reported airborne fibre concentrations of less than 0.01 fibres per mL (*SLR, 2013c*). However this result does not preclude the possibility of exposure to higher airborne asbestos concentrations during active recreational activities or during certain climatic conditions such as periods of strong winds.

As previously stated, short term Exposure Concentrations measured during disturbance on the mine site have been recorded concentrations in the range of less than 0.01 to 0.06 fibres per mL of air with the overwhelming majority of samples showing concentrations of less than 0.01 fibres per mL of air. This concentration range may be used to provide predictions of airborne fibre concentrations during remediation of the mill building and to assist in dust control planning. Airborne asbestos monitoring during the future remediation works can be used to confirm the accuracy of these predictions.

### 3.7 Exposure Assessment Summary

- The Community Exposure Groups classed as receptors were identified.
- Mechanisms for asbestos fibre release were determined to be two broad groupings. The first mechanism being the release of fibres by natural forces of erosion. The second mechanism being the release of fibres by activities of man, for example remediation works on the mine site, recreational activities disturbing the soil outside the mine site.
- Mechanism for asbestos fibres entering the breathing zone of receptors were determined to be two broad groupings. The first mechanism being local winds carrying the fibres longer distances. The second mechanism being the release of fibres by disturbing the soil by individuals and their subsequent exposure
- The estimated exposure concentrations received by receptors (Exposure Groups 1-7) were determined from available air monitoring data, both historic and current and which allowed for estimating an annual background exposure level (Table 9).
- The exposure assessment indicated that the general background for all community exposure groups was expected to remain below 0.01 fibres/mL. Based on the results of 310 air monitoring samples.
- There was no measurable difference in airborne asbestos fibre exposure between any community exposure groups and the control site at Tamworth. All 48 airborne samples returned fibre counts below the detection limit of below 0.01 fibres/mL.
- The exposure assessment indicated that during a disturbance within or near the mine site, persons in close proximity to disturbance, such as Woodsreef Residents and persons undertaking recreation activities near the mine (Exposure Groups 4, 5, 6 & 7) may have greater exposure than other groups. This determination was based on prudent observations rather than air monitoring data due to the intermittent nature of site disturbances, the likelihood or not of air monitoring capturing this data and the limitations of the air monitoring methodology such as the uncertainty associated with measurements and limits of detection.
- Recreational activity re-enactment data (20 samples over 7 activities) did not indicate levels above 0.01 fibres/mL, however it is not possible to exclude recreational users being exposed to levels greater than 0.01 fibres/mL.

## 4 RISK CHARACTERISATION

Risk characterisation involves the incorporation of the exposure assessment and the hazard assessment to provide an overall evaluation and assessment of risk. Risk assessment is used extensively in Australia and overseas to assist decision making on project acceptability and chemical use. Risk is the probability of an unwanted event happening and is often expressed as a multiple of its consequences and frequency. Risks can be defined to be acceptable or tolerable if the population will bear them without undue concern. Regulatory limits are set at points deemed 'acceptable' by the regulator, taking into account objective evidence of harm and the general views of society. Risks are unacceptable if they exceed a regulatory limit, or cannot be accepted.

As with any risk assessment there is always a degree of uncertainty associated with the assessment. The factors involved in this uncertainty and the implications are discussed in Appendix D.

Negligible risks are those so small that there is no cause for concern, or so unlikely that there is no valid reason to take action to reduce them. Humans continually expose themselves to, or have imposed upon them, the risk of injury or fatality. Self-imposed risk is known as voluntary risk and includes everyday events such as smoking, swimming and driving. Each has an associated risk that people voluntarily accept when weighed against the perceived benefits. A range of examples are listed in Table 13.

**Table 13 Examples of everyday risks in Australia**

Hazard	Risk of fatality per million person years
Smoking (20 cigarettes/day)	5000
Motoring	144
Accidents in the home	110
Owning firearms	30
Drowning	15
Fire	12
Electrocution	4
Aircraft accident	3
Lightning strike	1
Unexpected reaction to medicine	1
Snake bite	0.13
Shark attack	0.065

Adapted from Environment Australia, 1999

Asbestos fibres are ubiquitous in the environment and essentially the entire population do inhale fibres throughout their life. The receptor groups identified in the current study in general may not be exposed to airborne asbestos concentrations that vary from background ambient outdoor air levels unless significant disturbance of asbestos sources, either on the mine site or off the mine site occurs. Therefore it is useful to consider the significance of the current incidence rates and the estimated background rate.

It is suggested that the background incidence rate of mesothelioma (for those not exposed to asbestos fibres occupationally) is estimated to be less than 1 case per million population per year. Because of the high fatality rate and relatively short survival after diagnosis, incidence and mortality rates are similar (AIHW, 2004). However, it is debated whether this background incidence rate is either due to non-asbestos factors or background exposure to asbestos fibres.

For all exposure scenarios including high level historic occupational exposures, the current incidence of mesothelioma in Australia, as reported by Tossavainen (2004), is 35 cases per million population per year (approximately 490 cases per year) for the population over 15 years of age. This incidence rate reflects the high level occupational exposures occurring between 15 and 40 years ago. A vast majority of people being diagnosed with asbestos-related diseases such as mesothelioma are the workers who worked in the Australian asbestos mines, manufactured asbestos products, unloaded the shiploads of asbestos, worked on construction sites where asbestos was sprayed on the beams and where asbestos products were disrupted aggressively for long periods of time.

With regards to current potential community exposures, if airborne asbestos fibres were at measurable concentrations the exposure risks may be calculated using the US EPA inhalation unit risk factor (US EPA, 2005). Alternately a qualitative based risk assessment including the application of the SafeWork Australia Exposure Standards for airborne asbestos may be used to estimate risk associated with short-term community or worker exposure, such as short term recreational activities, such as less than a day in duration or when work-related activities are undertaken in the area surrounding the mine.

A simple comparison of an air measurement and a health benchmark can be thought of as a "screening" exercise, that is, the risk assessor is screening for possible problems. If the majority of samples are much less than the benchmark, then in a majority of cases it would be appropriate to conclude that a health impact is unlikely.

The principal benchmark used in this assessment was the SafeWork Australia eight-hour TWA value of 0.1 fibres/mL for asbestos exposure.

As stated above, to classify potential public health risk into groups, a qualitative method was used based on the factors considered to influence the likelihood of asbestos exposure to persons and communities. These factors included the following:

- Proximity of Exposure Groups to the mine
- Historic airborne asbestos fibre concentrations recorded at locations near Exposure Groups
- Possibility for airborne asbestos fibre concentrations exceeding 0.01 fibres/mL air during short term disturbances (due to either natural or man-made forces) of asbestos contaminated soils at locations near Exposure Groups
- Likelihood of Exposure Group being near mine site during short term disturbances of potentially asbestos contaminated soils by forces of nature
- Likelihood of Exposure Group creating short term disturbances of potentially asbestos contaminated soils near the mine
- Frequency of visits to mine site vicinity
- Time spent near mine vicinity during each visit

Table 14 below provides definitions for each Risk Level, based on the factors listed above.

**Table 14 Definitions of Risk Ratings**

Risk Level	Definition
<b>Negligible</b>	Health risk is <b>very low</b> given the combination of all known risk factors including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proximity to the mine</li> <li>• Historic airborne asbestos fibre concentrations</li> <li>• Possibility for airborne asbestos fibre concentrations exceeding 0.01 fibres/mL air during short term disturbances of asbestos contaminated soils at locations near Exposure Groups</li> <li>• Likelihood of natural forces or persons creating short term disturbances of potentially asbestos contaminated soils</li> <li>• Frequency of visits to mine site vicinity</li> <li>• Time spent near mine vicinity during each visit</li> </ul>
<b>Low</b>	Health risk is <b>low</b> , but clearly possible given the potential combination of risk factors described above, leading to increased exposure to airborne asbestos fibres
<b>Medium</b>	Health risk is <b>possible</b> given the potential combination of risk factors described above, leading to increased exposure to airborne asbestos fibres
<b>High</b>	Health risk is <b>likely</b> given the potential combination of risk factors described above, leading to increased exposure to airborne asbestos fibres

In the current study, both historic and current monitoring data locations both close to the mine and at distance from the mine including the Control at Tamworth, indicated airborne asbestos fibre concentrations below the detection limit of the monitoring systems of less than 0.01 fibres/mL air.

Therefore the degrees of risk posed by background exposure have been assessed as negligible when there is no major disturbance to the mine or surrounds.

However the above exposure assessment indicated that during a disturbance within or near the mine site, persons in close proximity to disturbance, such as Woodsreef Residents and persons undertaking recreation activities near the mine (Exposure Groups 4, 5, 6 & 7) may have greater short term exposures than other groups. This determination was based on prudent observations rather than air monitoring data due to the intermittent nature of site disturbances, the likelihood or not of air monitoring capturing this data, and the limitations of the air monitoring methodology such as the uncertainty associated with measurements and limits of detection..

Assessing the risk of short term exposures depends on the frequency of exposure, length of individual exposures and the exposure concentration. An isolated exposure to asbestos fibres of a short duration is extremely unlikely to result in the development of an asbestos - related disease, as fibre concentrations are likely to be insufficient to increase cumulative lifetime exposure (*enHealth, 2005*). At the other extreme, repeated short term exposures may be sufficient to increase cumulative lifetime exposure and hence increase the risk to an individual.

As previously stated persons in close proximity to disturbance on the mine site or in the surrounding area may be exposed to localised, short term increases in airborne asbestos fibre concentrations. The frequency and magnitude of these short term exposures is unclear.

Even though the general background risk from asbestos fibres, maybe considered negligible, based on available current and historic airborne asbestos fibre concentrations, for persons in close proximity disturbances, such as Woodsreef Residents and persons undertaking recreation activities near the mine (Exposure Groups 4, 5, 6 & 7) there is currently unquantified potential for short term exposure. Therefore the current report has classified the risk to these persons as negligible to low.

#### **4.1 Risk Characterisation Summary**

It appears that for all Exposure Groups the background airborne asbestos fibre concentrations they may be routinely exposed is less than 0.01 fibres per mL of air, that is below the minimum detection limit of the measurement technique. However for Exposure Groups in close proximity to the mine it would be prudent to assume these groups may additionally be potentially exposed to localised higher airborne asbestos concentrations possibly produced over short time periods, generated by their activities or events causing physical disturbance to asbestos containing soils. The current site containment activities and restrictions to access to the mine site and The Mine Road are designed to minimise these potential disturbance activities.

The estimated exposure risks of each group have been set out below in Table 15.

**Table 15 Community Exposure Groupings – Receptors and Estimated Exposure Risks**

Exposure Group	Estimated Background Exposure Risk from Background Airborne Asbestos Fibres
Control Group Tamworth	Negligible
Exposure Group 1 – Barraba Residents	Negligible
Exposure Group 2 – Barraba Special Populations	Negligible
Exposure Group 3 – Rural Residents 5 km to 13 km from Mine	Negligible
Exposure Group 4 – Woodsreef Residents	Negligible to Low
Exposure Group 5 – Woodsreef Special Populations	Negligible to Low
Exposure Group 6 – Passive Recreation within 5 km of Mine	Negligible to Low
Exposure Group 7 – Active Recreation within 5 km of Mine	Negligible to Low

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

Asbestos fibres are only becoming airborne at detectable concentrations when there is a physical disturbance on the mine site itself.

Furthermore detectable concentrations of airborne asbestos fibres have not been recorded outside the mine site in the surrounding communities and locations.

Airborne asbestos fibre concentrations above 0.01 fibres per mL air, that is the detection limit of the method, have only been recorded during three periods, 1992 (0.04 fibres per mL, sample numbers unknown), 2006 (1 sample, 0.06 fibres per mL) and 2012 (1 sample, 0.04 fibres per mL). These occurred when remediation activities have been occurring on the mine site and only at sampling locations on the mine site itself. The indicative approximation of samples above the detection limit is 1 sample above the detection limit per 140 samples taken on the mine site.

The public health implications from potential asbestos exposure arising from the abandoned mine site, prior to the demolition/remedial works, in adjacent communities and to members of the public through intermittent access to areas adjacent to the site were determined to be the following:

For residents of Barraba, Woodsreef and Rural Residents of areas between the mine and Barraba, the background airborne asbestos fibre concentrations they may be routinely exposed to is likely to be less than 0.01 fibres per mL of air and similar to areas located away from the influence of the mine, such as Tamworth.

However persons in close proximity to the mine, including residents of Woodsreef and rural areas near the mine as well as Recreational Users who frequent areas near the mine, they may be additionally exposed to localised higher airborne asbestos concentrations, possibly over short time periods, generated by activities of man or natural conditions, such as strong winds, causing physical disturbance to asbestos containing soils in or around the mine site. This determination was based on prudent observations rather than air monitoring data due to the intermittent nature of site disturbances, the likelihood or not of air monitoring capturing this data and the limitations of the air monitoring methodology such as the uncertainty associated with measurements and limits of detection.

Therefore persons in close proximity to the mine site, such as less than 5km, from the mine are considered to have an unquantified but slightly elevated exposure risk from short term disturbances on the mine site. Therefore Woodsreef Residents and Recreational Users were considered to have an elevated but low risk from asbestos exposure.

In contrast, persons at significant distances, such as greater than 5km, from the mine are considered to have negligible exposure risk from disturbances on the mine site. This includes Barraba Residents and Rural Residents.

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## **Scope of a Health Impact Assessment**

A Health Impact Assessment has been defined as “*the process of estimating the potential impact of a chemical, biological, physical or social agent on a specified human population system under a specific set of conditions and for a certain time frame*” (enHealth, 2001). As such a Health Impact Assessment takes into account both positive and negative impacts on the population highlighted in the assessment.

The enHealth sets out in its publication, *Health Impact Assessment Guidelines* a general framework for Health Impact Assessments (enhealth, 2001). These include:

- Screening - Should the project be subject to Health Impact Assessment?
- Scoping – Identify issue to be addressed and level of appraisal.
- Profiling – Who is affected and what is their current health status
- Risk Assessment – What are the hazards? What is the likelihood of harm occurring? Who might be exposed?
- Risk Management – Prevention or minimisation of risk of harm. Managing of consequences and specific risk communications.
- Decision making and ongoing management
- Monitoring and evaluations – Pre and post project evaluation

**SLR Air Monitoring Reports**

SLR airborne asbestos fibre monitoring reports for monitoring conducted between 14/11/2013 to 14/12/2013 as listed below.

SLR Reference 610.10893.00110-FRS-1

SLR Reference 610.10893.00110-FRS-2

SLR Reference 610.10893.00110-FRS-3

SLR Reference 610.10893.00110-FRS-4

SLR Reference 610.10893.00110-FRS-5

SLR Reference 610.10893.00110-FRS-6

## Airborne Asbestos Monitoring Report

### Test method in accordance with NOHSC:3003(2005) & AP-01

**Reference:** 610.10893.00110-FRS-1

**Date:** Friday, 22 November 2013

**Removal Contractor:** Not Applicable

**Job Location:** Woodsreef, Barraba, Tamworth, See Monitoring Locations Below, NSW

**Client:** NSW Trade and Investment

516 High Street

Maitland

NSW 2320

Date of Test	Sample Code	Type	Mon	Loc'n	Airflow (L/min)			TIME			Factor	Count		CONC'N (fibres/mL)	REM
					ON	OFF	AVGE	ON	OFF	TOTAL(min)		Fields	Fibres		
14/11/2013	Blank			0				N/A	N/A		100	0	N/A		
14/11/2013	FRS-1	5	1		1.00	1.00	1.00	06:07	18:05	718	481	100	0	<0.01	
14/11/2013	FRS-2	5	2		1.50	1.50	1.50	10:55	15:48	293	481	100	1	<0.01	
14/11/2013	FRS-3	5	3		1.50	1.50	1.50	08:11	14:17	366	481	100	0	<0.01	
14/11/2013	FRS-4	5	4		1.50	1.50	1.50	10:15	16:07	352	481	100	2	<0.01	
14/11/2013	FRS-5	5	5		1.50	1.50	1.50	09:08	15:04	356	481	100	0	<0.01	52942
14/11/2013	FRS-6	5	6		1.50	1.50	1.50	09:32	15:20	348	481	100	0	<0.01	
14/11/2013	FRS-7	5	7		1.50	1.50	1.50	10:02	15:59	357	481	100	0	<0.01	
14/11/2013	FRS-8	5	8		1.50	1.50	1.50	09:51	15:45	354	481	100	0	<0.01	
14/11/2013	FRS-9	5	9		1.50	1.50	1.50	08:44	14:39	355	481	100	0	<0.01	

#### Monitoring Locations :

- 0 Blank
- 1 Residence Tamworth
- 2 Barraba Primary School, Mower (Cricket Nets)
- 3 Glenn Riddle Reserve
- 4 Boxpark Station
- 5 Wynaroy Property
- 6 Camping (Flora and Fauna Trail)
- 7 Woodsreef Township (Church)
- 8 Picnic Site
- 9 Mr Burgess Property

#### Sample Types:

5 Background

#### Remarks:

52942 Monitor Dislodged from Stand on pick-up

#### Notes On Sampling:

The above results only relate to the samples tested. This report confirms preliminary report \_N/A

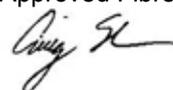


#### NATA ACCREDITED LABORATORY NUMBER:3130

Accredited for compliance with ISO/IEC 17025.  
The results of the tests, calibrations and/or measurements included in this document are traceable to Australian/national standards. NATA is a signatory to the APLAC mutual recognition arrangement for the mutual recognition of the equivalence of testing, calibration and inspection reports.



Approved Fibre Counter: Dr Craig Simpson



Approved Fibre Signatory: Dr Craig Simpson

## EXPLANATION OF REPORT

Date:	Date monitoring carried out.
Sample Code:	Internal SLR Consulting Australia Pty Ltd code number to identify each test.
Type:	Indicates type or reason for monitoring, eg. background air monitoring before removal starts.
Personal:	Air monitor worn by person.
Static:	Air monitor placed in a stationary location.
Monitor Location:	Where each monitor is positioned.
Air Flow:	The air flow through the pump is recorded at the start and at the finish of each run, and the average flow calculated.
Time:	The time (24 hour clock) when monitor is started, when finished, and the total time in minutes.
Factor:	A factor related to the particular microscope and filters employed, the factor forms part of the calculation.
Fields:	The total number of standard unit areas examined across the filter sample.
Fibres:	The total number of asbestos <i>conforming</i> fibres counted.
Concentration:	The time weighted average number of <i>conforming</i> asbestos fibres present for the millilitres of air sampled. If the number is less than 0.01 fibres/mL it is recorded as <0.01 as this is the level of sensitivity of the method.

The current exposure standard for any mixture of asbestos fibres (crocidolite, amosite and chrysotile) is 0.1 fibres/mL.

## Airborne Asbestos Monitoring Report

### Test method in accordance with NOHSC:3003(2005) & AP-01

**Reference:** 610.10893.00110-FRS-2

**Date:** Friday, 22 November 2013

**Removal Contractor:** Not Applicable

**Job Location:** Woodsreef, Barraba, Tamworth, See Monitoring Locations Below, NSW

**Client:** NSW Trade and Investment

516 High Street

Maitland

NSW 2320

Date of Test	Sample Code	Type	Mon Loc'n	Airflow (L/min)			TIME			Factor	Count		CONC'N (fibres/mL)	REM
				ON	OFF	AVGE	ON	OFF	TOTAL(min)		Fields	Fibres		
20/11/2013	Blank		0				N/A	N/A		100	0	N/A		
20/11/2013	FRS-10	5	1	1.00	1.10	1.05	06:10	17:44	694	481	100	0	<0.01	
20/11/2013	FRS-11	5	10	1.50	1.50	1.50	10:25	16:27	362	481	100	0	<0.01	
20/11/2013	FRS-12	5	3	1.50	1.50	1.50	07:51	13:51	360	481	100	0	<0.01	
20/11/2013	FRS-13	5	11	1.50	1.50	1.50	09:01	15:05	364	481	100	0.5	<0.01	
20/11/2013	FRS-14	5	5	1.50	1.50	1.50	08:42	14:42	360	481	100	1	<0.01	
20/11/2013	FRS-15	5	6	1.50	1.50	1.50	09:43	15:43	360	481	100	0	<0.01	
20/11/2013	FRS-16	5	7	1.50	1.50	1.50	09:17	15:18	361	481	100	1	<0.01	
20/11/2013	FRS-17	5	8	1.50	1.40	1.45	10:00	16:00	360	481	100	0	<0.01	
20/11/2013	FRS-18	5	9	1.50	1.50	1.50	08:17	14:16	359	481	100	0	<0.01	

#### Monitoring Locations :

- 0 Blank
- 1 Residence Tamworth
- 3 Glenn Riddle Reserve
- 5 Wynaroy Property
- 6 Camping (Flora and Fauna Trail)
- 7 Woodsreef Township (Church)
- 8 Picnic Site
- 9 Mr Burgess Property
- 10 Barraba Primary School (Cricket Nets)
- 11 Boxpark Station - Main Gate

#### Sample Types:

5 Background

#### Remarks:

#### Notes On Sampling:

The above results only relate to the samples tested. This report confirms preliminary report \_N/A

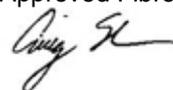


#### NATA ACCREDITED LABORATORY NUMBER:3130

Accredited for compliance with ISO/IEC 17025.  
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Approved Fibre Counter: Dr Craig Simpson



Approved Fibre Signatory: Dr Craig Simpson

## EXPLANATION OF REPORT

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Fields:	The total number of standard unit areas examined across the filter sample.
Fibres:	The total number of asbestos <i>conforming</i> fibres counted.
Concentration:	The time weighted average number of <i>conforming</i> asbestos fibres present for the millilitres of air sampled. If the number is less than 0.01 fibres/mL it is recorded as <0.01 as this is the level of sensitivity of the method.

The current exposure standard for any mixture of asbestos fibres (crocidolite, amosite and chrysotile) is 0.1 fibres/mL.

## Airborne Asbestos Monitoring Report

### Test method in accordance with NOHSC:3003(2005) & AP-01

**Reference:** 610.10893.00110-FRS-3

**Date:** Wednesday, 22 January 2014

**Removal Contractor:** Not Applicable

**Job Location:** Woodsreef, Barraba, Tamworth, See Monitoring Locations Below, NSW

**Client:** NSW Trade and Investment

516 High Street

Maitland

NSW 2320

Date of Test	Sample Code	Type	Mon	Loc'n	Airflow (L/min)			TIME			Factor	Count		CONC'N (fibres/mL)	REM
					ON	OFF	AVGE	ON	OFF	TOTAL(min)		Fields	Fibres		
26/11/2013	Blank			0				N/A	N/A		100	0	N/A		
26/11/2013	FRS-19	5		1	1.00	1.10	1.05	06:03	17:27	684	481	100	0	<0.01	
26/11/2013	FRS-20	5		10	1.50	1.50	1.50	10:05	16:10	365	481	100	0	<0.01	
26/11/2013	FRS-21	5		3	1.50	1.50	1.50	07:41	13:42	361	481	100	0	<0.01	
26/11/2013	FRS-22	5		4	1.50	1.50	1.50	09:10	15:22	372	481	100	0	<0.01	
26/11/2013	FRS-23	5		5	1.50	1.50	1.50	08:55	14:55	360	481	100	1	<0.01	
26/11/2013	FRS-24	5		6	1.50	1.50	1.50	08:35	14:36	361	481	100	0	<0.01	
26/11/2013	FRS-25	5		7	1.50	1.50	1.50	09:31	15:40	369	481	100	0	<0.01	
26/11/2013	FRS-26	5		8	1.50	1.50	1.50	09:41	15:50	369	481	100	0	<0.01	
26/11/2013	FRS-27	5		9	1.50	1.50	1.50	08:02	14:01	359	481	100	0	<0.01	

#### Monitoring Locations :

- 0 Blank
- 1 Residence Tamworth
- 3 Glenn Riddle Reserve
- 4 Boxpark Station
- 5 Wynaroy Property
- 6 Camping (Flora and Fauna Trail)
- 7 Woodsreef Township (Church)
- 8 Picnic Site
- 9 Mr Burgess Property
- 10 Barraba Primary School (Cricket Nets)

#### Sample Types:

5 Background

#### Remarks:

#### Notes On Sampling:

The above results only relate to the samples tested. This report confirms preliminary report \_N/A

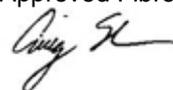


#### NATA ACCREDITED LABORATORY NUMBER:3130

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Approved Fibre Counter: Dr Craig Simpson



Approved Fibre Signatory: Dr Craig Simpson

## EXPLANATION OF REPORT

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Fibres:	The total number of asbestos <i>conforming</i> fibres counted.
Concentration:	The time weighted average number of <i>conforming</i> asbestos fibres present for the millilitres of air sampled. If the number is less than 0.01 fibres/mL it is recorded as <0.01 as this is the level of sensitivity of the method.

The current exposure standard for any mixture of asbestos fibres (crocidolite, amosite and chrysotile) is 0.1 fibres/mL.

## Airborne Asbestos Monitoring Report

### Test method in accordance with NOHSC:3003(2005) & AP-01

**Reference:** 610.10893.00110-FRS-4

**Date:** Wednesday, 22 January 2014

**Removal Contractor:** Not Applicable

**Job Location:** Woodsreef, Barraba, Tamworth, See Monitoring Locations Below, NSW

**Client:** NSW Trade and Investment

516 High Street

Maitland

NSW 2320

Date of Test	Sample Code	Type	Mon	Loc'n	Airflow (L/min)			TIME			Factor	Count		CONC'N (fibres/mL)	REM
					ON	OFF	AVGE	ON	OFF	TOTAL(min)		Fields	Fibres		
2/12/2013	Blank			0				N/A	N/A		100	0	N/A		
2/12/2013	FRS-28	5		1	1.00	1.00	1.00	06:08	17:12	664	481	100	0.5	<0.01	
2/12/2013	FRS-29	5		10	1.50	1.50	1.50	09:53	15:53	360	481	100	0	<0.01	
2/12/2013	FRS-30	5		3	1.50	1.50	1.50	07:49	13:50	361	481	100	0	<0.01	
2/12/2013	FRS-31	5		11	1.50	1.50	1.50	08:43	14:43	360	481	100	0	<0.01	
2/12/2013	FRS-32	5		5	1.50	1.50	1.50	08:28	14:28	360	481	100	0	<0.01	
2/12/2013	FRS-33	5		6	1.50	1.50	1.50	09:11	15:11	360	481	100	1	<0.01	
2/12/2013	FRS-34	5		7	1.50	1.50	1.50	08:54	14:55	361	481	100	0	<0.01	
2/12/2013	FRS-35	5		8	1.50	1.50	1.50	09:26	15:26	360	481	100	0	<0.01	
2/12/2013	FRS-36	5		9	1.50	1.50	1.50	08:07	14:08	361	481	100	0	<0.01	52973

#### Monitoring Locations :

- 0 Blank
- 1 Residence Tamworth
- 3 Glenn Riddle Reserve
- 5 Wynaroy Property
- 6 Camping (Flora and Fauna Trail)
- 7 Woodsreef Township (Church)
- 8 Picnic Site
- 9 Mr Burgess Property
- 10 Barraba Primary School (Cricket Nets)
- 11 Boxpark Station - Main Gate

#### Sample Types:

5 Background

#### Remarks:

52973 Reject Sample, Cowl lid left on for 1 hour

#### Notes On Sampling:

The above results only relate to the samples tested. This report confirms preliminary report \_N/A

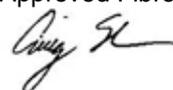


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Approved Fibre Counter: Dr Craig Simpson



Approved Fibre Signatory: Dr Craig Simpson

## EXPLANATION OF REPORT

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Air Flow:	The air flow through the pump is recorded at the start and at the finish of each run, and the average flow calculated.
Time:	The time (24 hour clock) when monitor is started, when finished, and the total time in minutes.
Factor:	A factor related to the particular microscope and filters employed, the factor forms part of the calculation.
Fields:	The total number of standard unit areas examined across the filter sample.
Fibres:	The total number of asbestos <i>conforming</i> fibres counted.
Concentration:	The time weighted average number of <i>conforming</i> asbestos fibres present for the millilitres of air sampled. If the number is less than 0.01 fibres/mL it is recorded as <0.01 as this is the level of sensitivity of the method.

The current exposure standard for any mixture of asbestos fibres (crocidolite, amosite and chrysotile) is 0.1 fibres/mL.

## Airborne Asbestos Monitoring Report

### Test method in accordance with NOHSC:3003(2005) & AP-01

**Reference:** 610.10893.00110-FRS-5

**Date:** Wednesday, 22 January 2014

**Removal Contractor:** Not Applicable

**Job Location:** Woodsreef, Barraba, Tamworth, See Monitoring Locations Below, NSW

**Client:** NSW Trade and Investment

516 High Street

Maitland

NSW 2320

Date of Test	Sample Code	Type	Mon	Loc'n	Airflow (L/min)			TIME			Factor	Count		CONC'N (fibres/mL)	REM
					ON	OFF	AVGE	ON	OFF	TOTAL(min)		Fields	Fibres		
8/12/2013	Blank			0				N/A	N/A		100	0	N/A		
8/12/2013	FRS-37	5		10	1.50	1.50	1.50	09:30	16:20	410	481	100	1	<0.01	
8/12/2013	FRS-38	5		3	1.50	1.50	1.50	07:10	14:00	410	481	100	0	<0.01	
8/12/2013	FRS-39	5		11	1.50	1.50	1.50	08:00	15:18	438	481	100	2.5	<0.01	
8/12/2013	FRS-40	5		5	1.50	1.50	1.50	08:27	15:03	396	481	100	1	<0.01	
8/12/2013	FRS-41	5		6	1.50	1.50	1.50	08:40	15:42	422	481	100	2	<0.01	
8/12/2013	FRS-42	5		7	1.50	1.50	1.50	08:15	15:27	432	481	100	3	<0.01	
8/12/2013	FRS-43	5		8	1.50	1.50	1.50	08:53	15:52	419	481	100	1	<0.01	
8/12/2013	FRS-44	5		9	1.50	1.50	1.50	07:30	14:41	431	481	100	1	<0.01	

#### Monitoring Locations :

- 0 Blank
- 3 Glenn Riddle Reserve
- 5 Wynaroy Property
- 6 Camping (Flora and Fauna Trail)
- 7 Woodsreef Township (Church)
- 8 Picnic Site
- 9 Mr Burgess Property
- 10 Barraba Primary School (Cricket Nets)
- 11 Boxpark Station - Main Gate

#### Sample Types: Remarks:

5 Background

#### Notes On Sampling:

The above results only relate to the samples tested. This report confirms preliminary report \_N/A



#### NATA ACCREDITED LABORATORY NUMBER:3130

Accredited for compliance with ISO/IEC 17025.  
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Approved Fibre Signatory: Dr Craig Simpson

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Time:	The time (24 hour clock) when monitor is started, when finished, and the total time in minutes.
Factor:	A factor related to the particular microscope and filters employed, the factor forms part of the calculation.
Fields:	The total number of standard unit areas examined across the filter sample.
Fibres:	The total number of asbestos <i>conforming</i> fibres counted.
Concentration:	The time weighted average number of <i>conforming</i> asbestos fibres present for the millilitres of air sampled. If the number is less than 0.01 fibres/mL it is recorded as <0.01 as this is the level of sensitivity of the method.

The current exposure standard for any mixture of asbestos fibres (crocidolite, amosite and chrysotile) is 0.1 fibres/mL.

## Airborne Asbestos Monitoring Report

### Test method in accordance with NOHSC:3003(2005) & AP-01

**Reference:** 610.10893.00110-FRS-6

**Date:** Wednesday, 22 January 2014

**Removal Contractor:** Not Applicable

**Job Location:** Woodsreef, Barraba, Tamworth, See Monitoring Locations Below, NSW

**Client:** NSW Trade and Investment

516 High Street

Maitland

NSW 2320

Date of Test	Sample Code	Type	Mon Loc'n	Airflow (L/min)			TIME			Factor	Count		CONC'N (fibres/mL)	REM
				ON	OFF	AVGE	ON	OFF	TOTAL(min)		Fields	Fibres		
14/12/2013	Blank		0				N/A	N/A		100	0	N/A		
14/12/2013	FRS-45	5	10	1.50	1.50	1.50	09:50	16:03	373	481	100	0	<0.01	
14/12/2013	FRS-46	5	3	1.50	1.50	1.50	07:50	14:07	377	481	100	0	<0.01	
14/12/2013	FRS-47	5	11	1.50	1.50	1.50	08:52	14:53	361	481	100	1	<0.01	
14/12/2013	FRS-48	5	5	1.50	1.50	1.50	08:35	14:37	362	481	100	0	<0.01	
14/12/2013	FRS-49	5	6	1.50	1.50	1.50	09:25	15:38	373	481	100	0	<0.01	
14/12/2013	FRS-50	5	7	1.50	1.50	1.50	09:05	15:06	361	481	100	0	<0.01	
14/12/2013	FRS-51	5	8	1.50	1.50	1.50	09:35	15:45	370	481	100	0	<0.01	
14/12/2013	FRS-52	5	9	1.50	1.50	1.50	08:15	14:24	369	481	100	0	<0.01	

#### Monitoring Locations :

- 0 Blank
- 3 Glenn Riddle Reserve
- 5 Wynaroy Property
- 6 Camping (Flora and Fauna Trail)
- 7 Woodsreef Township (Church)
- 8 Picnic Site
- 9 Mr Burgess Property
- 10 Barraba Primary School (Cricket Nets)
- 11 Boxpark Station - Main Gate

#### Sample Types: Remarks:

5 Background

#### Notes On Sampling:

The above results only relate to the samples tested. This report confirms preliminary report \_N/A



#### NATA ACCREDITED LABORATORY NUMBER:3130

Accredited for compliance with ISO/IEC 17025. The results of the tests, calibrations and/or measurements included in this document are traceable to Australian/national standards. NATA is a signatory to the APLAC mutual recognition arrangement for the mutual recognition of the equivalence of testing, calibration and inspection reports.



Approved Fibre Counter: Dr Craig Simpson



Approved Fibre Signatory: Dr Craig Simpson

## EXPLANATION OF REPORT

Date:	Date monitoring carried out.
Sample Code:	Internal SLR Consulting Australia Pty Ltd code number to identify each test.
Type:	Indicates type or reason for monitoring, eg. background air monitoring before removal starts.
Personal:	Air monitor worn by person.
Static:	Air monitor placed in a stationary location.
Monitor Location:	Where each monitor is positioned.
Air Flow:	The air flow through the pump is recorded at the start and at the finish of each run, and the average flow calculated.
Time:	The time (24 hour clock) when monitor is started, when finished, and the total time in minutes.
Factor:	A factor related to the particular microscope and filters employed, the factor forms part of the calculation.
Fields:	The total number of standard unit areas examined across the filter sample.
Fibres:	The total number of asbestos <i>conforming</i> fibres counted.
Concentration:	The time weighted average number of <i>conforming</i> asbestos fibres present for the millilitres of air sampled. If the number is less than 0.01 fibres/mL it is recorded as <0.01 as this is the level of sensitivity of the method.

The current exposure standard for any mixture of asbestos fibres (crocidolite, amosite and chrysotile) is 0.1 fibres/mL.

## **Asbestos Toxicity, Disease and Historic Occupational Exposures**

### **Asbestosis and Pleural Disease**

Asbestosis and asbestos pleural disease are non-malignant asbestos diseases that are slowly progressive. Asbestosis is a slowly progressive, fibrotic (scarring) lung disease caused by a cascade of responses to inhaled asbestos fibres. The development of asbestosis is directly associated with both multitude and duration of asbestos exposure. The onset of visible fibrosis rarely occurs earlier than 15–20 years from first exposure. Not all individuals exposed to high levels of asbestos fibre develop asbestosis (*enHealth, 2005*).

Asbestos pleural disease is a non-malignant disease caused by inhalation of asbestos fibres that scar the pleura. The pleura is the thin membrane lining the lung and chest cavity. If the scarring is diffuse and extends along the chest wall, it is called pleural thickening. If the scarring is more focused and well-defined, it is called pleural plaques. Asbestos pleural disease results in a similar scarring process as the one that occurs inside the lung with asbestosis; however, it occurs in the lining of the lungs rather than in the lungs (*ATSDR, 2001*).

Asbestosis occurs in individuals exposed to large quantities of asbestos fibres over long periods of time and is recognised to result from exposure to all forms of asbestos (i.e. chrysotile and amphiboles). There is evidence to suggest a threshold effect associated with asbestosis with a threshold fibre dosage, that is the dose or exposure below which an adverse effect is not expected, of between 25 to 100 F/mL/year (F/mL/year is also referred to as fibre years and is used to describe the cumulative exposure to asbestos fibres). However, this is an area of some debate (*ATSDR, 2001*). In a review of the epidemiologic evidence for an asbestosis exposure response relationship, the World Health Organization Task Group on Environmental Criteria for Chrysotile Asbestos (*WHO, 1998*) concluded that “the risk at lower exposure levels is not known.”

There is evidence of an increased incidence of asbestosis in smokers which may be due to a number of issues such as smoking effects on lung function and defence mechanisms, however, no specific ‘dose’ of tobacco that caused this enhanced incidence could be determined (*ATSDR, 2001*). Lung fibre retention is expected to play a role in the development of asbestosis with trapped asbestos fibres having a prolonged lung residence time. Therefore, the progression of asbestosis may continue for many years after exposure (*ATSDR, 2001*).

In regards to pleural plaques *enHealth* (2005) provides the following:

*The relationship between dose and response for pleural plaques is much weaker than for asbestosis. A good correlation has been shown between pleural plaques and asbestos fibres in the lungs; however, there is large variation.*

### **Lung Cancer**

National and international health agencies have classified asbestos as a known human carcinogen. There is a long latency period of up to 40 years between the initial exposure to asbestos fibres and the development of lung cancer. The combination of tobacco smoking and asbestos exposure synergistically increases the risk of developing cancer (*enHealth, 2005; ATSDR, 2001*).

There is general agreement that a dose response relationship exists, that is, higher risks occur with higher exposure to asbestos fibres. It is, however, unclear whether a threshold asbestos dose exists for lung cancer. This depends not only on cumulative asbestos exposure, but also on other underlying lung cancer risks (*ATSDR, 2000*). The incidence of lung cancer from all causes is high in the general population, so asbestos as a causative factor is difficult to prove in an individual patient (*ATSDR, 2000*).

## Mesothelioma

enHealth (2005) provides the following description:

*Mesothelioma is a cancer of the lining of the chest cavity (the pleura) or, less commonly, the lining of the abdominal cavity (the peritoneum). It is generally, but not always, associated with continued occupational or other high exposure to respirable asbestos. Fairly consistent and strong epidemiological evidence indicates that approximately 70% to 90% of mesothelioma cases can be related to asbestos exposure and hence it is accepted that asbestos exposure is the cause.*

*The ability to link asbestos exposure to the development of mesothelioma is subject to sufficient time elapsing since the exposure occurred, to permit the disease to have initiated and developed. Mesothelioma generally does not occur until 20–50 years after exposure. Mesothelioma has been associated with all types of asbestos. However, the evidence for causality is strongest for amphiboles. Mesothelioma occurrence does not appear to be affected by smoking history.*

The following is taken from ATSDR (2000):

*Mesothelioma can occur with low asbestos exposure; however, very low background environmental exposures carry only an extremely low risk. The dose necessary for effect appears to be lower for asbestos-induced mesothelioma than for pulmonary asbestosis or lung cancer.*

A characteristic of mesothelioma is that there is a long latency period (20–30 years) before the signs and symptoms of the disease become apparent. In addition, diagnosis of the disease can be difficult. Mortality from malignant pleural mesothelioma is a function of past exposure to asbestos.

The incidence rates of malignant mesothelioma have been increasing in Australia since 1965 and it is suggested that these rates of mesothelioma are related to the use and production of asbestos in Australia in previous decades. There is no indication of when the incidence rates of mesothelioma will start to decline. Mesothelioma incidence rates are higher in males than females, possibly because of a higher exposure in male-dominated industries that produced or used asbestos (e.g. construction and manufacturing) (NOHSC, 2002).

The Australian mesothelioma register data ranked the risks of mesothelioma according to the following groups listed from highest to lowest (Leigh and Driscoll 2003). It should be noted that the risks presented in Table 16 reflect high historical exposures and do not represent the level of risk associated with current exposure.

**Table 16 Mesothelioma Risks in Occupational Groups in Australia**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Lifetime Risk (%)</b>
Power station worker	11.8
Railway labourer	6.4
Navy/merchant navy	5.1
Carpenter/joiner	2.4
Waterside worker	2.1
Plasterer	2.0
Boilermaker/welder	1.9
Bricklayer	1.8
Plumber	1.7
Painter/Decorator	1.2
Electrical fitter/mechanic/electrician	0.7
Vehicle mechanic	0.7
<i>All Australian men</i>	<i>0.39</i>
<i>All Australian women</i>	<i>0.05</i>

Extrapolation from epidemiological studies provides an estimated background incidence of non-occupational mesothelioma of one to two per million per year (Hillerdal, 1999). Case data suggest a dose response relationship with risk increasing with increasing dose; however, a threshold concentration below which mesothelioma will not occur has not been demonstrated (ATSDR, 2000; Hillerdal, 1999).

**Historic Exposures to Asbestos**

In most evaluations asbestos-related disease rates are predicted to peak sometime during the next few decades. This can be attributed to long latency periods of asbestos-related disease and high historic exposures. Exposure to asbestos has been found in many occupations, the major contributions coming from the primary asbestos production or manufacture industries, from the building industry generally and from shipping-related activities. Numerous other occupations may also involve asbestos exposure, albeit to a lesser degree. Such occupations include the staff of coal powered power stations, mechanics repairing motor vehicles (brakes, clutch), carpenters and woodworkers, electricians, welders, etc (Hillerdal, 1999; Niklinski, 2004 )

With few exceptions little or no sampling was conducted prior to the 1950s when exposure concentrations were thought generally to be higher than those monitored more recently, due to lack of use of dust control equipment at the time and procedures to reduce dust levels that were introduced only later. However, airborne fibre concentrations within workplaces in the 1950's were estimated and recreated to be within tens to thousands of fibres/mL. Measurements from workplaces in the 1960s often showed peak doses of 20 fibres/mL and much less in more recent years. Due to long latency periods, current mesothelioma rates are likely due to these 'high' historical occupational exposures.

## **UNCERTAINTIES AND LIMITATIONS**

Uncertainties are present in all risk assessments and this reinforces the need for a systematic and rigorous approach. While the enHealth human health risk assessment process attempts to estimate risk as accurately as possible, there are various sources of uncertainty in the process that should be examined. Understanding these uncertainties places the risk estimates in a proper perspective allowing them to be applied in practice with an appropriate level of confidence.

In general, the uncertainties and limitations of human health risk assessment can be classified into the following categories:

- Personnel exposure assessment.
- Toxicological assessment.
- Risk characterisation.

Various sources of uncertainty are briefly discussed below.

### **Uncertainty related to Exposure Assessment**

The uncertainties that may exist in exposure assessment include the estimation of concentrations in the air and the use of PCM analytical techniques:

- Uncertainties relating to air modelling
- Uncertainties relating to the use of historic data
- Random error in sample analysis may produce erroneous data
- PCM cannot distinguish between asbestos and non-asbestos conforming fibres, which causes uncertainty about the actual asbestos fibre concentration for a given area and artificially boost the asbestos fibre counts.

### **Uncertainty related to Toxicity Assessment**

In general, the available scientific literature is insufficient to provide a thorough understanding of all of the potential toxic properties of chemicals or materials to which humans may be exposed. It is necessary therefore, to extrapolate these properties from data obtained under other conditions of exposure and involving experimental laboratory animals. This may introduce two types of uncertainties into the risk assessment, as follows:

- Those related to extrapolation from one species to another
- Those related to extrapolating from high exposure doses, usually in experimental animal studies, to the lower doses usually estimated for human exposure situations

For asbestos, epidemiology studies used to derive toxicity information often involve high exposure concentrations in an occupational setting.

Safety factors are introduced to compensate for these uncertainties. The use of safety factors and extrapolating from high exposure concentrations typically leads to a conservative over-estimation of dose response relationships.

**Uncertainty in Risk Characterisation**

The methods available for the estimation of cancer risk do not account for the increased lifetime risk of lung cancer due to prior lung disease. Cancer risks could therefore be underestimated for susceptible subpopulations with prior lung disease.

There is a degree of uncertainty in estimating the risk of contracting cancer (lung cancer or mesothelioma) at low doses. As exposure response data are derived mainly from high occupational exposures scenarios, there is difficulty in estimating risk for short-term exposure at low levels over long periods of time. Additionally, no risk estimates are calculated for non-cancer risks due to the unavailability of any method.

In this study, measured asbestos fibre concentrations were used to estimate risks from exposure and this approach may conservatively over-estimate the risks involved.

**Uncertainties Conclusion**

While a number of parameters used within the risk assessment have a moderate degree of uncertainty associated with them, values used to define these parameters have been selected to be conservative. This has resulted in estimates of risk which tend towards a conservative overestimation.

## Ongoing Management Monitoring and Evaluation

### Review of proposal emission control and management measures

As part of the scope, SLR was requested to review the contractor's Asbestos Management Plan (AMP) for onsite dust suppression control measures prior to the commencement of major works. Whilst it is not directly feed into the Health Impact Assessment (Pre-remediation) it may provide marker for any emission controls impacts that may occur during and after the Mill Building demolition.

In general the onsite works for dust suppression appear suitable for the demolition work proposed.

There is however a significant omission of external site dust emission and emergency management planning, particularly with the management of asbestos contamination from the clean zone to the parking area and from the intersection of The Mine Road and Bundarra Barraba Road.

It may not be fully understood by the contractor and their environmental consultants that these areas are asbestos contaminated, with some specific areas having been classified as high to extreme hazard.

As such the impact to both workers and the general public in these areas need to be further considered. These may include:

- Transport and vehicle movements management
- Laying of blue metal or other dust suppression materials at the intersection to temporarily encapsulate the car parking area
- Closure of publicly accessible areas and /or exclusion of the public when truck movements may occur. This includes the Flora Trail.

Finally there does not appear to be an appreciation of the contamination of the site outside the demolition zone. Whilst we understand the difficulty imposed by the nature of the site entering a clean zone that is surrounded by dirty zones on all sides does not appear to be fully considered or management using standard control techniques.

There is also a need to consider site run off and culvert sediment control and wastewater management during the demolition process. The issue appears to be briefly referenced in the AMP but is indicated that it is considered in the Environmental Management Plan, which was not reviewed.

A reference has also been made that that the waste water being used for dust suppression has been tested by an "environmentalist [sic]". There is no scientific documentation to validate this claim. The use of mine waste water is a complicated undertaking and the sampling of pit water needs to be regularly undertaken with emphasis on source sampling depth (compared to surface level) and any potential changes in environmental condition. It would be recommended that mine waste water reuse specialists and appropriate government authority review the water analysis undertake to ensure the appropriate testing has been undertaken and the risk to both occupational, environmental and public health has been suitably assessed.

We would also suggest that documented risk assessments be referenced in the report in order to determine the levels of risk that the demolition works may be impacted by the pre-existing hazard levels that have been determined.

#### **NOTE:**

The review is on dust suppression and dust generation that may have an impact on the community and workers in and around the site, including the greater community. It is not a review of removal, demolition or management techniques being considered by the contractor.