



NATURE CONSERVATION

KEPCO Bylong Australia (KEPCO) is committed to conserving biodiversity. Wherever possible, KEPCO has avoided potential ecological impacts and sought to improve biodiversity outcomes through significant modifications to the design of the Bylong Coal Project (the Project). KEPCO’s long-term objective is to provide for a net benefit to flora and fauna within the locality and region, substantially increasing the proportions of native woodland and threatened species habitat under conservation tenure.

KEPCO has completed a comprehensive Ecological Impact Assessment to determine potential project impacts to terrestrial and aquatic ecology. The assessment includes consideration of the Project’s potential to impact listed threatened species and ecological communities, and migratory species protected under State and Commonwealth legislation. To inform the assessment, extensive field surveys were completed between 2011 and 2014 to identify flora and fauna in the project area. The surveys were undertaken over a range of seasons to maximise opportunities for recording migratory and breeding species and to accurately identify plants in flower.

The Ecological Impact Assessment found that no threatened aquatic communities were identified given the highly degraded nature of local ephemeral waterways. The Project will potentially directly disturb up to 754 ha of native vegetation, including three communities regarded as ‘threatened ecological communities’ under the Commonwealth legislation – *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. The majority of threatened fauna species in the study area are highly mobile and are considered likely to utilise habitat resources throughout the locality and within adjacent conservation reserves.

MANAGEMENT MEASURES

KEPCO will prepare a detailed *Biodiversity Management Plan* prior to the commencement of construction activities with the aim of avoiding, mitigating and or offsetting the identified potential impacts of the Project. This plan will provide detailed mitigation measures as well as specifications for the restoration and ongoing management of biodiversity offset areas.

In particular, measures will be put in place to minimise dust, noise and visual disturbances with a pre-clearing survey to be carried out in the proposed disturbance areas to limit vegetation and habitat loss, and ensure the safe relocation of fauna as

required. Progressive rehabilitation of disturbed areas will also be undertaken, including select reinstatement of native vegetation.

An ecological monitoring program will be established as a component of the *Biodiversity Management Plan* to monitor the ongoing status and health of flora and fauna communities retained within the project boundary, and to assess the success of management measures.

BIODIVERSITY OFFSETS

A substantive Biodiversity Offset Strategy has been prepared for the Project to offset the predicted potential residual impacts. The long-term objective of this strategy is to provide for a net benefit to flora and fauna within the locality and region by substantially increasing the proportions of native woodland and threatened species habitat under conservation tenure.

The primary target for the Biodiversity Offset Strategy is the conservation of Box Gum Woodland, Derived Native Grassland and other woodland communities which provide habitat for the suite of threatened flora and fauna species known to occur in the project area. KEPCO’s strategy primarily relies on ‘direct’ biodiversity offsets with six offset areas proposed for conservation of approximately 4,081 ha of land and approximately 3,791 ha of native vegetation.

These offset areas will provide the offsetting requirements for the Project through the retention and management of existing habitat and biodiversity values under an in perpetuity conservation tenure. The Biodiversity Offset Areas as a whole will provide a substantial amount of habitat for the suite of threatened species that may be potentially impacted by the Project.