South32

# **Appin Mine**

Area 9 Longwall 902 End of Panel surface water and groundwater monitoring review



# **HGEO Pty Ltd**

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# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

EXE	ECUTI	IVE SUMMARY	1
1.	INTR	ODUCTION	2
	1.1	Hydrogeology	4
	1.2	Surface water hydrology	6
	1.3	Potential mining effects	
	1.4	Water management framework	9
2.	MON	IITORING NETWORK	.12
	2.1	Groundwater monitoring	. 12
	2.2	Surface water monitoring	. 13
3.	GRO	UNDWATER ASSESSMENT	.15
	3.1	Groundwater levels	. 15
	3.2	Groundwater chemistry	. 18
	3.3	Private groundwater bores and dams	
	3.4	Mine water balance	. 20
4.	SUR	FACE WATER ASSESSMENT	.22
	4.1	Water level and flow	. 22
	4.2	Water chemistry	. 23
	4.3	Gas emissions	. 24
5.	CON	CLUSIONS	.26
6.	REC	OMMENDATIONS	27
7.	REFE	ERENCES	28
APF	PEND	IX 1 – Groundwater bore hydrographs	.29
APF	PEND	IX 2 – Groundwater chemistry time-series plots	30
APF	PEND	IX 3 – Surface water chemistry time-series plots	31
APF	PEND	IX 4 – Surface water chemistry TARP summary	1

# LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Summary of potential water-related mining impacts	8
Table 2. TARP Performance Criteria for AA9	10
Table 3. Baseline water chemistry TARP trigger levels	11
Table 4. Groundwater monitoring sites in AA9	12
Table 5. Surface water monitoring sites	13
Table 6. Groundwater level observations	15
Table 7. Summary of groundwater quality near AA9	18
Table 8. Summary of surface water TARP levels for reporting period	24



# LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Location of Appin Colliery Area 9	2
Figure 2. Appin Area 9 Longwall layout and monitoring locations	3
Figure 3. Stratigraphy of the Southern Sydney Basin	4
Figure 4. Hydrogeological cross section (N-S) through AA9	5
Figure 5. Contours of predicted subsidence due to Longwall 902 (in mm; MSEC 2012)	8
Figure 6. Rainfall and solar exposure at Douglas Park	14
Figure 7. Pressure head change hydrograph for S1913	16
Figure 8. Pressure head change hydrograph for S1941	17
Figure 9. Pressure head change hydrograph for S2080	17
Figure 10. Pressure head change hydrograph for S2281	18
Figure 11. AA9 mine water balance	21
Figure 12. Nepean river flow rates at WaterNSW weirs	22
Figure 13. Flow duration curves for period Jan 2018 to May 2019	23



# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

South32 Illawarra Coal operates Appin Colliery extracting hard coking coal used for steel production. Appin Colliery is an underground mine located near the township of Douglas Park in the Southern Coalfield of New South Wales. Appin Area 9 (AA9) consists of four approved longwalls (Longwalls 901 to 904), all located to the north of, and offset from, the Nepean River. Longwall 902 commenced on 12 May 2018 and was completed on 3 April 2019.

Potential impacts to watercourses and aquifers are monitored and managed through the AA9 Water Management Plan (WMP) (BHPBilliton, 2014). This report presents results of the surface water and groundwater monitoring program following the end of Longwall 902 (End of Panel Report), including an assessment of data against performance criteria in the Trigger Action Response Plan (TARP).

#### Groundwater assessment

Groundwater levels are monitored at seven bores within and surrounding AA9 as part of a much wider groundwater monitoring network covering the Appin, West Cliff and Dendrobium mining areas. During extraction of Longwall 902, a decline in groundwater pressure occurred in the Hawkesbury Sandstone at monitoring bore S1941, located 630 m away. The observed groundwater pressure reductions are within the predicted range for the upper two sensors at 65 m and 125 m depth and greater than the predicted 10 m drawdown for the sensor at 201.6 m depth (but less than the Level 1 TARP). No significant change in groundwater chemistry is noted for the reporting period.

An impact to a bore was recorded at one private property; a WMP has been implemented in response to the impact.

Groundwater inflow to the mine is calculated from the daily mine water balance. The 20-day moving average mine inflow fluctuated between ~1.7 and 0 ML/day during the extraction of Longwall 902, below the TARP Level 1 trigger of 2.7 ML/day.

#### Surface water assessment

Monthly monitoring by South32 indicates a decline in pool water levels at site NR0 of 0.43 m from the baseline range during the reporting periods for Longwalls 901 and 902. Water levels at site NR110 located 3.5 km further upstream show a decline of less than 0.15 m from the baseline range over the same period. Pool water levels at other sites are within the baseline range. Additional monitoring at NR0 and NR110 is recommended. Monitoring of Nepean River gauging weirs at Maldon and Menangle of Cataract River at Broughtons Pass showed that there were no no-flow days recorded for the period since January 2018 and after LW902 extraction.

The Longwall 902 reporting period was characterised by widely variable water quality in the Nepean River. During the reporting period, Level 1 and 2 TARP levels have been triggered for electrical conductivity at NR0, SW3(NR1) and NR2 and Level 1 TARP levels have been triggered for pH at NR0 and SW3(NR1). Although the observed increases in water salinity may be associated with the low rainfall during 2017 and 2018, similar deviations from the baseline mean were not observed at the upstream control site NR110. The TARP trigger levels occurred between May 2018 and March 2019 and surface water quality in the Nepean River has since returned to baseline levels. Twenty-five gas release zones were identified in the Nepean River during the monitoring period for Longwall 901. An additional six gas release zones were identified in the Nepean River during the monitoring period for Longwall 901. An estimated emission rates of <3000 L/min and triggered a TARP Level 1 response under the AA9 WMP.



# I. INTRODUCTION

South32 Illawarra Coal operates the Appin Colliery, extracting hard coking coal used for steel production. Appin Colliery is an underground mine located near the township of Douglas Park in the Southern Coalfield of New South Wales (Figure 1).

AA9 consists of four approved longwalls (Longwalls 901 to 904), all located to the north of, and offset from, the Nepean River (Figure 2). Longwall 901 commenced on 19 January 2016 and was completed on 8 September 2017. Longwall 902 commenced on 12 May 2018 and was completed on 3 April 2019. Longwall 902 has a width of 305 m, a length of 2153 m and a cutting height of between 2.8 and 2.9 m (full seam extraction).

Potential impacts to watercourses and aquifers are monitored and managed through the AA9 WMP (BHPBilliton, 2014), developed in accordance with the Bulli Seam Operations (BSO) Approval Condition 5 (h), Schedule 3. This report presents results of the surface water and groundwater monitoring program following the end of Longwall 901 (End of Panel Report), including an assessment of data against management criteria defined in the AA9 WMP.

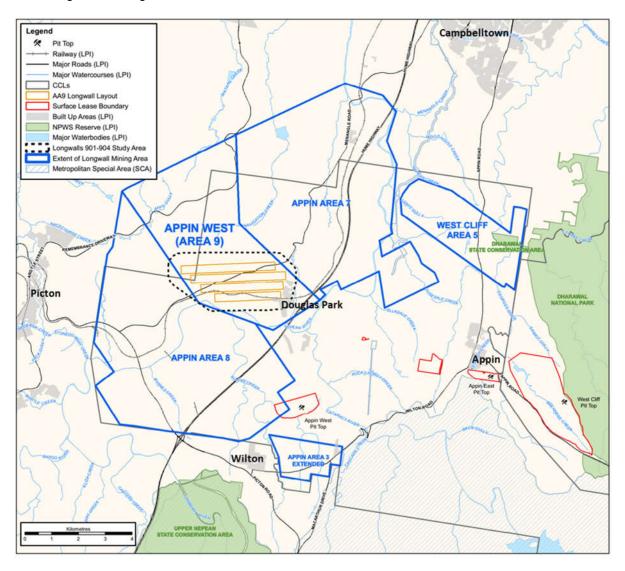
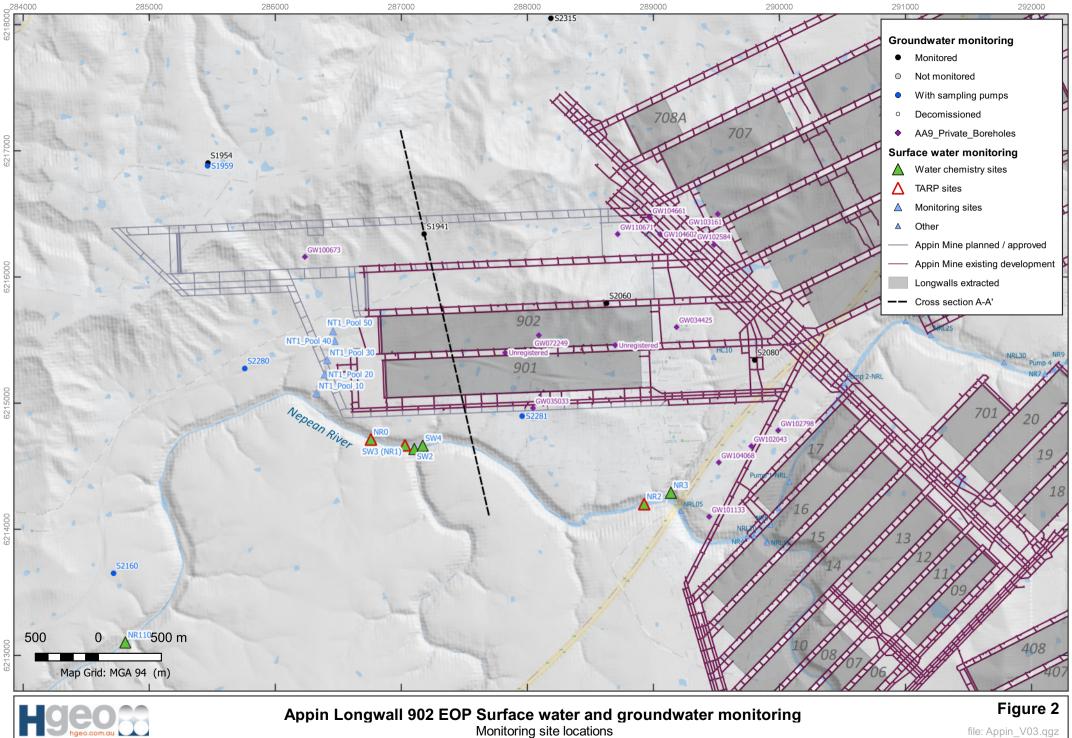


Figure 1. Location of Appin Colliery Area 9

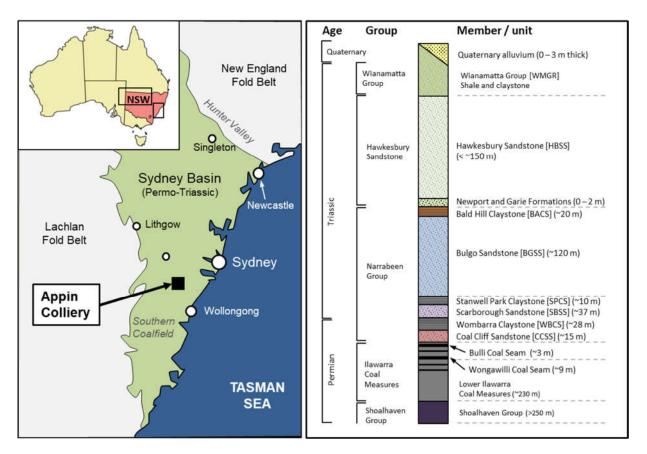


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		ſ	Monitoring	site loca	ations			



# 1.1 Hydrogeology

Appin Colliery is located within the Southern Coalfield which is one of the five major coalfields that lie within the Sydney Geological Basin. The Basin is a Permo-Triassic sedimentary rock sequence, underlain by undifferentiated sediments of Carboniferous and Devonian age (Figure 3). The Bulli and Wongawilli Coal Seams are the primary target seams in the top part of the Illawarra Coal Measures. The Coal Measures are overlain by Triassic sandstones, siltstones and claystones of the Narrabeen Group, the Hawkesbury Sandstone and the Wianamatta Group. The Hawkesbury Sandstone is the dominant outcropping formation adjacent to, and underlying, the Nepean River Gorge. Wianamatta Group shales and claystone-dominated units underlie elevated areas including the Razorback Range. The geology and hydrogeology of the area is illustrated in a north-south cross section in Figure 4.



#### Figure 3. Stratigraphy of the Southern Sydney Basin

Three main groundwater systems are recognised:

- Perched groundwater systems associated with fractures and bedding planes within the shallow sandstone and shale units of the Wianamatta Group and Hawkesbury Sandstone. These may be ephemeral and/or disconnected from the deeper groundwater systems;
- Shallow groundwater systems: layered water-bearing zones within the saturated Hawkesbury Sandstone. The highest yielding groundwater bores are typically associated with coarse sandstone units and/or fractured sandstone; and
- 3. Deeper groundwater systems within the Narrabeen Group and the Illawarra Coal Measures. These units typically are of much lower permeability than the Hawkesbury Sandstone and produce low bore yields and poorer water quality.



The private groundwater supply bores in the vicinity of AA9 are between 70 m to 240 m deep, with water obtained primarily from water-bearing horizons within the Hawkesbury Sandstone, and minor perched horizons within the Wianamatta Group shale (e.g. GW104602 at 29.9 m; GeoTerra, 2011). Groundwater in the NoW registered bores, where reported, is generally fresh to brackish with salinity (total dissolved solids; TDS) between 260mg/I and 2500mg/L. The majority of aquifer intersections over the Longwalls 901 to 904 Study Area lie at or below the elevation of the Nepean River.

The Nepean River is a 'gaining' system, where groundwater flows from the plateau under a regional hydraulic gradient to the river. These flows are predominantly horizontal, and determined by a confined flow along discrete layers underlain by fine grained or relatively impermeable strata within the Hawkesbury Sandstone. Vibrating wire piezometers at monitoring bore S1941 show that groundwater pressures (potentiometric levels) are higher in the Narrabeen Group than in the Hawkesbury Sandstone and may be sub-artesian to artesian in some areas (the potentiometric level is near or above the ground surface). The lower groundwater pressures within the Hawkesbury Sandstone may be due to pumping from bores as well as discharges to the Nepean River gorge. These observations suggest that the Bald Hill Claystone is an effective confining unit in this area.

Recharge of the groundwater system occurs after rainfall infiltrates into the plateau soil, as well as the underlying Wianamatta Shale and/or Hawkesbury Sandstone. The majority of infiltrating water discharges from temporary seeps in the cliffs of the Nepean River gorge ("interflow"). The low permeability of the Bald Hill Claystone acts as an aquitard between the Hawkesbury Sandstone and the Bulgo Sandstone. It has been observed to maintain its low permeability after subsidence and inhibit the movement of water and gas.

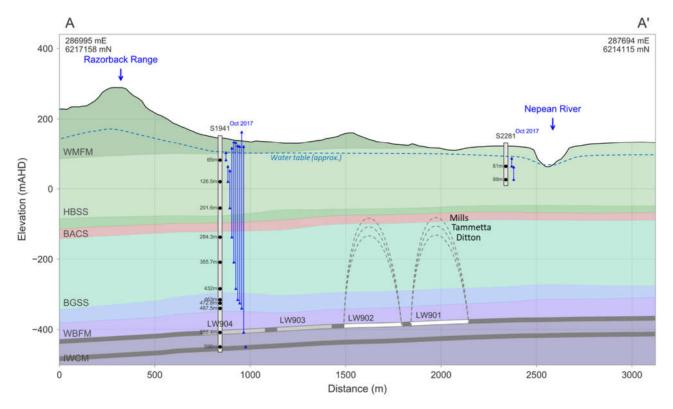


Figure 4. Hydrogeological cross section (N-S) through AA9



### **1.2** Surface water hydrology

Drainage lines within AA9 predominantly flow south to the Nepean River, which itself flows in an easterly direction. MSEC (2012) subdivided the Nepean River into two sections based on streambed morphology:

- Section 1 (upstream of Allens Creek) where flow is controlled by boulder fields, two rockbars and a small weir.
- Section 2 (downstream of Allens Creek) where the river is a flooded valley controlled by the Douglas Park Causeway.

Water flows in the Nepean River are derived from a number of sources, which include flows from catchment areas, licensed discharges (including Appin Colliery and Tahmoor Colliery) and runoff from agricultural and urban areas. Within the Study Area, river flow is predominantly controlled by the Maldon Weir (upstream) and the Douglas Park Weir (downstream). Water levels down river of the Study Area (i.e. down river of Douglas Park Causeway), are regulated by the Menangle Weir.

Water flows in the Nepean River:

- Vary greatly and are highly responsive to rain events due to the significant areas of catchment.
- Reach very high levels during sustained storm events, while minimum flow is rarely less than 1.5 ML/day (approx. 5 percentile flow).
- Cease on a small number of occasions, usually only when the rate of pumping out of the River exceeds the rate of inflow under low flow/drought conditions.

Median flow in the river section adjacent to the proposed longwalls is likely to be ~15% more than the median flow rate at Maldon Weir, which is 16.5 ML/day, and a little less than the median flow rate at Menangle Weir, which is 34.7 ML/day. Therefore median (50 percentile) flow rate adjacent to Longwall 901 is about 30 ML/day.

Baseline surface water monitoring for AA9 has been ongoing since October 2008 and provides a comprehensive baseline data set prior to extraction of Longwalls 901 to 904.

Tributaries to the Nepean River within the Longwalls 901 to 904 Study Area include:

- Nepean River Tributary 1 located directly above the proposed Longwalls 902 to 904.
- Harris Creek located east of the proposed longwalls and 400 m from Longwall 903 at its closest point. It is located just outside the Study Area, although Harris Creek has experienced valley related and far-field horizontal subsidence movements.

First and second order channels also flow to the Nepean River, and form smaller gullies along the cliffs of the gorge which generally discharge via elevated streams cascading down cliffs after sufficient rain. The majority of rainfall in the smaller catchments would infiltrate into these plateau soils and enter the groundwater system.

There are no areas considered flood prone and there are no upland swamps in the Study Area. A number of earth farm dams are located in the streams and are used as water sources on rural properties. All major streams have dams within their channels and catchment areas.



# **1.3** Potential mining effects

Extraction of coal using longwall methods commonly results in ground subsidence, deformation and fracturing of overlying strata and depressurisation of adjacent geological units (Peng and Chiang, 1984). The distribution of fracturing and its effects on aquifer characteristics has been well documented from numerous case studies (Booth, 1986; Forster and Enever, 1992; Guo et al., 2007; Mills, 2011; Tammetta, 2016; Tammetta, 2014; Tammetta, 2013).

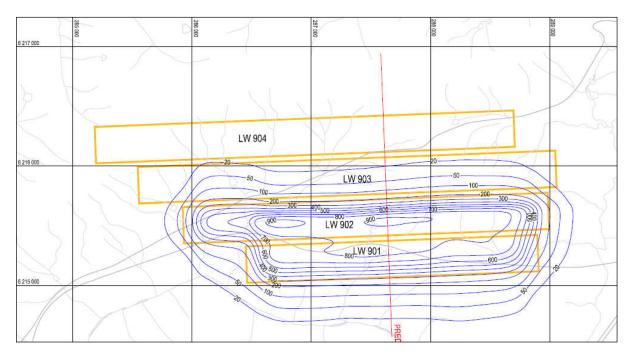
While authors differ slightly in their terminology, there is general agreement on the overall sequence and pattern of fracturing that develops above a longwall. Immediately above a mined coal seam, the roof collapses into the void to form a caved zone that extends tens of metres above the seam. As the mining proceeds, a network of connected fractures extends above the caved zone to a height above the seam that is largely dictated by the width and mining height of the panel relative to the depth of cover (Mills, 2011; Ditton and Merrick, 2014; Tammetta, 2013). The development of fractures above (and below) the mined seam results in changes to aquifer properties; specifically, the permeability of the rock mass increases and groundwater pathways are potentially created between shallow and deeper groundwater systems. Subsidence and associated phenomena such as valley closure commonly result in increased surface cracking due to the unconfined nature of the surface rock. This type of surface cracking is typically limited to the top 10 to 20 m and may not be connected to the deeper fracture zones. Nevertheless, surface fracturing can affect shallow and perched groundwater systems and stream flow characteristics.

Calculations based on published geotechnical models indicate that the zone of connected fracturing above longwalls in AA9 is unlikely to extend above the base of the Bald Hill Claystone (Figure 4). A recent review commissioned by the Department of Planning and the Environment (DPE) of published methods for estimating the height of fracturing (PSM, 2017) concluded that the empirical approaches of Ditton and Merrick (2014) and Tammetta (2013) may not be accurate for all mining settings and such estimates should be considered indicative only. However, the observation of low water make at AA9 and strata gas movements is consistent with the extent of connective fracturing being limited to below the Bald Hill Claystone.

### 1.3.1 Ground subsidence

Ground subsidence and potential effects on natural and built surface features was assessed by MSEC (2012), prior to the commencement of mining at AA9. Contours of predicted subsidence after Longwall 902 are reproduced in MSEC (2012). Approximately 20 mm or less subsidence was expected at the Nepean River in response to Longwall 902.





#### Figure 5. Contours of predicted subsidence due to Longwall 902 (in mm; MSEC 2012)

An End of Panel subsidence assessment was carried out following the completion of mining Longwall 902 (MSEC, 2019). The report assessed subsidence impacts to nearby natural drainage features including the Nepean River, and Harris Creek and the natural drainage lines directly above Longwall 902 that flow into the Nepean River. The impacts on natural drainage lines associated with the extraction of Longwall 902 recorded by the IC Environmental Field Team were similar to or less than the MSEC assessments provided in Reports Nos. MSEC488 and MSEC829, which supported the Extraction Plan and Modification Applications, respectively.

#### 1.3.2 Surface water and groundwater effects

Ecoengineers (2012) and GeoTerra (2011) identified a number of possible water related environmental consequences that may occur due to the extraction of Longwalls 901 to 904. Those consequences are summarised in Table 1.

Consequence	Description	Impact / Likelihood
Gas emissions in the Nepean River and other areas	Based on observations at (AA7) it is likely that "minor" gas emissions will appear in the Nepean River as a consequence of mining Longwalls 901 to 904. Potential effects may include Dissolved Oxygen "sags", and visible iron precipitates (localised iron staining).	Impact: Negligible Likelihood: Likely (Ecoengineers, 2012)
Groundwater outflows and ferruginous springs	The appearance of ferruginous springs due to mining has been noted in some Bulli Seam mining areas especially along margins of outcropping Wianamatta Shale. Ferruginous springs have not been detected in relation to mining of Longwalls 701 and 702, either in the walls of the Nepean River gorge or along adjacent tributaries.	Impact: Negligible Likelihood: Low (Ecoengineers, 2012)

#### Table 1. Summary of potential water-related mining impacts



Consequence	Description	Impact / Likelihood
Sub-bed flow diversions and un- natural pool drainage	Section 1 of the Nepean River is characterised by boulder fields, which are less susceptible to fracturing than rockbars. Two rockbars have been identified in the Study Area: Rockbar NR-A9-RB01 is located 370 m from the nearest longwall. Rockbar NR-A9RB02 is submerged at times of high flow, and therefore does not restrict the surface water at these times.	Impact: Negligible Likelihood: Low (Ecoengineers, 2012) Nepean River Tributary 1: Likely impact
Impacts to streams and farm dams	Many farm dams have been mined under and monitored, with only a small number of dams exhibiting impacts (becoming dry) following mining. It is predicted that the impact on farm dams from mining Longwalls 901 to 904 will be similar.	Impact: Minor Likelihood: Likely (Ecoengineers, 2012)
Reduced groundwater yield	Six NoW registered bores within or near the proposed Longwalls 901 to 904 may be affected by subsidence, where the bores predominantly obtain water from the Hawkesbury Sandstone, rather than the overlying Wianamatta Group shale and sandstones. Groundwater levels in the Hawkesbury Sandstone are predicted to reduce by up to 10 m (WMP, p.14)	Impact: Negligible Likelihood: Likely (GeoTerra, 2011)
Groundwater quality impacts	It is likely that some [minor and localised] water quality changes will occur but there is a relatively low level of groundwater resource use in the area. Monitoring of potentially affected bores within AA9 is conducted in consultation with the owners.	Impact: Negligible Likelihood: Likely (GeoTerra, 2011)
Gas emissions	There is potential for strata gas emissions into private bores. Any such emissions are likely to diminish over time. Any bores with gas releases are decommissioned during the mining period.	Impact: Negligible Likelihood: Likely (GeoTerra, 2011)

### **1.4** Water management framework

Groundwater monitoring and reporting is carried out according to the AA9 WMP (BHPBilliton, 2014). The objectives of the WMP are to identify at risk surface water and groundwater features and characteristics within the Longwalls 901 to 904 Study Area and to manage the potential impacts and/or environmental consequences of the proposed workings on watercourses and aquifers, with specific focus on the Nepean River and its tributaries.

### 1.4.1 Trigger Action Response Plan (TARP)

Effects of mining on surface water and groundwater are managed through ongoing monitoring and regular reporting against agreed performance measures. The Water Management Plan (BHPBilliton, 2014) includes a Trigger Action Response Plan (TARP) which outlines specific performance measures and management actions to be taken in the event of a trigger event. The water related performance levels are listed in Table 2. Water chemistry TARP trigger levels calculated from baseline data (prior to the start of mining on 19/1/2016) are presented in Table 3.



### Table 2. TARP Performance Criteria for AA9

Type / Location	Parameter	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	
Surface water quality					
Nepean River: ■ NR0 ■ SW3 (NR1)	рН	Reduction* > 1SD < 2SD for two consecutive months	Reduction > 2SD for two consecutive months		
<ul> <li>NR2</li> <li>If and where gas plumes above 3000 L/min are detected</li> </ul>	DO	Reduction > 1SD < 2SD for two consecutive months	Reduction > 2SD for two consecutive months	As for level 2, for 6	
* Compared with baseline monitoring prior to mining	EC, Total Fe, Total Mn	N/A	Increase > 2SD for 2 consecutive months	consecutive months	
	Gas plumes	Plume <3000 L/min	Plume >3000 L/min		
	Cloudiness, iron staining	More than negligible			
Groundwater inflow to the mine	Inflow from the goaf (Over 20- day average)	Increase of between 2.7 and 3.0 ML/day	Increase of between 3.0 and 3.4 ML/day	Abnormal increase greater than 3.4 ML/day	
Groundwater levels					
Private bores South32 Piezometers: • S1913 (EAW5) • S1936 (EAW7) • S1941 (EAW9) • S1954 (EAW18) • S2080 (EAW58) • S2280 (Harris Ck 6) • S2281 (Harris Ck 7)	Reduction below predicted standing water level or pressure head in the Hawkesbury Sandstone.	5.0 to 7.5 m over a minimum two-month period.	7.5 to 10.0 m over a minimum two-month period.	>10 m over a minimum two-month period.	

In relation to surface water flows, BSO Approval Condition 1, Schedule 3 stipulates that there should be *negligible diversion of flows or changes in the natural drainage behaviour of pools* in the Nepean River. In relation to other watercourses, there should be *no greater subsidence impact or environmental consequences than predicted in the Environmental Assessment and PPR*. The term "negligible" is defined within the Project Approval as "small and unimportant, such as not to be worth considering".



Parameter		NR0	SW3 (NR1)	NR2
Baseline samples (n):		39	39	111
	Mean	7.90	7.92	7.75
рН	Mean – -1SD	7.59	7.61	7.39
	Mean – -2SD	7.29	7.31	7.03
EC	Mean	245.3	257.3	256.5
	Mean – +1SD	332.4	349.9	348.8
	Mean – +2SD	419.4	442.5	441.0
	Mean	93.0	88.9	86.6
DO	Mean – -1SD	79.2	77.1	73.4
	Mean – -2SD	65.3	65.3	60.2
	Mean	0.35	0.32	0.40
Fe (Total)	Mean – +2SD	0.65	0.59	0.77
Mp (Total)	Mean	0.025	0.020	0.028
Mn (Total)	Mean – +2SD	0.051	0.039	0.059

### Table 3. Baseline water chemistry TARP trigger levels

# 2. MONITORING NETWORK

# 2.1 Groundwater monitoring

Groundwater levels are monitored using multi-level vibrating wire piezometers (VWP) which are grouted into boreholes. There are seven groundwater monitoring sites relevant to AA9 operations and specified in the TARP, shown in Figure 2, and listed in Table 4.

Bore ID	Alternate name	Total depth	Number of piezometers	Formations monitored	Date installed
S1913	EAW5	612.1	10	HBSS, BGSS, SBSS, BUSM	2008
S1936	EAW2	611.0	10	HBSS, BGSS, SBSS, BUSM	2008
S1941	EAW9	605.2	11	HBSS, BGSS, SBSS, BUSM	2008
S1954	EAW18	797.2	13	WMGR, HBSS, BUSM	2008
S2080	EAW58	524.2	10	HBSS, BGSS, SBSS, CCSS	2010
S2280	Harris Creek 6	110.0	2	HBSS	2014
S2281	Harris Creek 7	110.0	2	HBSS	2014

#### Table 4. Groundwater monitoring sites in AA9

Deep groundwater responses to mining are assessed primarily through the use of time-series hydrographs for multi-level piezometer sites (VWPs). Noisy data are filtered and removed where practical. Hydrographs are presented in Appendix 1 and discussed in Section 3.1.

Hydrographs are plotted in terms of *potentiometric head* (mAHD). Potentiometric head can be thought of as the theoretical level to which water would rise in a bore that is open to an aquifer at a given elevation, and is calculated by adding the measured pore pressure (at the VWP, expressed in m of water) to the elevation of the sensor (in m AHD). The potentiometric head in a confined aquifer system can be (and often is) different to the water table elevation at the same location.

Hydrographs presented in this assessment include the ground elevation at the bore site and the elevation of the Nepean River adjacent to Longwall 901. Note also that individual hydrograph traces are presented as dotted lines at times when the **pressure head** is below a threshold of 2 m. The pressure head is the absolute pore pressure at the sensor expressed in m of water. When the pressure head is below that threshold it is an indication that the rock matrix is approaching complete desaturation at the location of the sensor. This condition is not always apparent from plots of total piezometric head alone. Hydrographs of pressure head are also presented in Appendix 1.

### 2.1.1 Mine inflow

Groundwater inflow to AA9 is calculated from the daily mine water balance by accounting for water pumped in and out of the mine area.



### 2.2 Surface water monitoring

Surface water levels and chemistry are monitored at the sites shown in Figure 2 and listed in Table 5.

Site	Watercourse	MGA_mE	MGA_mN	Field Observations	Chemistry (Lab)	Flow
NR0	Nepean River	286759	6214712	Y	Y	
SW3 (NR1)	Nepean River	287029	6214666	Y	Y	
NR2	Nepean River	288927	6214200	Y	Y	
NR3	Harris Creek	289139	6214290	Y	Y	
SW2	Allens Creek	287103	6214637	Y	Y	
SW4	Nepean River	287170	6214663	Y	Y	
NR110	Nepean River	284812	6213103	Y	Y	
NT1_Pool 10	Nepean Trib. 1	286324	6215077	Y		
NT1_Pool 20	Nepean Trib. 1	286391	6215227	Y		
NT1_Pool 30	Nepean Trib. 1	286411	6215341	Y		
NT1_Pool 40	Nepean Trib. 1	286472	6215492	Y		
NT1_Pool 50	Nepean Trib. 1	286458	6215569	Y		
Maldon Weir	Nepean River	281633	6212737			Y*
Menangle Weir	Nepean River	291843	6222415			Y*
Broughtons Pass weir	Cataract River	292076	6210296			Y*

Table 5. Surface water monitoring sites

Note\* Weirs operated by WaterNSW : Water level and flow at 15-minute frequency

#### 2.2.1 Weather observations

Rainfall and solar exposure data has been collected at Douglas Park (Bureau of meteorology site 068200) since 1974 (with some gaps). Monthly rainfall, cumulative rainfall residual and solar radiation since the start of 2013 are plotted in Figure 6. Daily temperatures range between 20 to 45 °C in January and between 10 and 27 °C in July (at Campbelltown). Evapotranspiration also varies seasonally in line with temperature and solar radiation, peaking during the summer months.

Average annual rainfall since 1974 is 742 mm (2.03 mm/day). Rain can fall year-round with slightly higher monthly average rainfall in late summer months (February-March). It is common for a substantial proportion of the annual rainfall to be delivered in one or two large rainfall events, during which significant surface water runoff and groundwater recharge is generated. This was the case during the reporting period with a heavy rainfall event in March 2019.



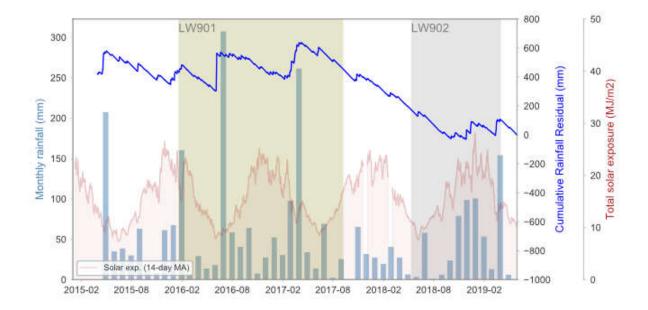


Figure 6. Rainfall and solar exposure at Douglas Park

# 3. GROUNDWATER ASSESSMENT

### 3.1 Groundwater levels

Groundwater bore hydrographs are presented in Figures 7, 8, 9 and 10 and Appendix 1. Observations in relation to temporal trends in groundwater pressures are listed in Table 6.

#### Table 6. Groundwater level observations

Bore	Observations	TARP Level
S1913 (EAW5)	S1913 is located 3.0 km north of Longwall 902. It has three sensors in the Hawkesbury Sandstone at 65 m, 137 m and 194 m depth. During Longwall 901, groundwater pressures in the upper two Hawkesbury Sandstone sensors remained relatively stable or increased slightly and the 194 m sensor showed a slight declining trend compared with the previous two years. In the period after completion of Longwall 901 and before the start of Longwall 902, all three Hawkesbury Sandstone sensors showed a declining trend, with pressures at the 137 m and 194 m sensors declining to levels below the Nepean River. Pressures at the 194 m sensor declined by 14.3 m since the commencement of mining in AA9, more than the predicted maximum reduction of 10 m. Groundwater pressure data for the Hawkesbury Sandstone is not available during mining at Longwall 902 as the logger battery failed.	Not triggered
S1936 (EAW7)	S1936 is located 3.2 km north east of Longwall 902 and above Longwall 706 in AA7. All sensors apart from the shallowest Hawkesbury Sandstone sensor (65 m) failed in 2014 due to subsidence in AA7. The 65 m sensor shows a slight declining trend during longwalls 901 and 902 which is unlikely to be associated with mining in AA9.	Not triggered
S1941 (EAW9)	S1941 is located 630 m north of Longwall 902 (and above planned Longwall 904). It has three sensors in the Hawkesbury Sandstone at 65 m, 126.5 m and 201.6 m depth. All three sensors show declines in groundwater pressure following the start of mining at Longwall 901, followed by a period of recovery and then further declines during mining at Longwall 902. Groundwater pressure at the sensor at 201.6 m has declined by 14.3 m to a level below the Nepean River since the commencement of mining in AA9, which is more than the predicted maximum reduction of 10 m. Groundwater pressures at the sensors at 65 m and 126.5 m have declined by less than 5 m and the heads remain above the level of the Nepean River. As at 24 June 2019 (when the last VWP download occurred), groundwater pressures in the three Hawkesbury Sandstone sensors had not yet started to recover.	Not triggered
S1954 (EAW 18)	S1954 is located 1.8 km northwest of Longwall 902, on the far side of the Razorback range from AA9. S1954 has seven sensors within the Wianamatta Group shales and five sensors within the Hawkesbury Sandstone. Loggers were inoperative from early 2014 to mid-2017 with monitoring re-commencing at the end of mining at Longwall 901. During mining at Longwall 902, groundwater pressures at the Wianamatta Group shale and Hawkesbury Sandstone sensors declined by less than 2.5 m. Piezometric levels in all sensors remained above the elevation of the Nepean River following mining at Longwall 901 and throughout mining at Longwall 902.	Not triggered
S2080 (EAW58)	S2080 is located 760 m east of Longwall 902. It has three sensors in the Hawkesbury Sandstone at 65 m, 95 m and 170 m depth. Groundwater pressures in the uppermost Hawkesbury Sandstone sensor (65 m) declined by approximately 7 m during mining at longwalls 901 and 902 but remain approximately 20 m above the elevation of the Nepean River. Groundwater pressures remained relatively stable at the other two Hawkesbury Sandstone sensors with levels below that of the Nepean River prior to and throughout mining at longwalls 901 and 902.	Not triggered
S2280 (Harris Ck 6)	S2280 is located 1.1 km west of Longwall 902 and has two sensors within the Hawkesbury Sandstone (60 m and 99 m depth). Groundwater pressure at both sensors was relatively stable during mining at longwalls 901 and 902, and piezometric head in both sensors remains above the elevation of the Nepean River.	Not triggered

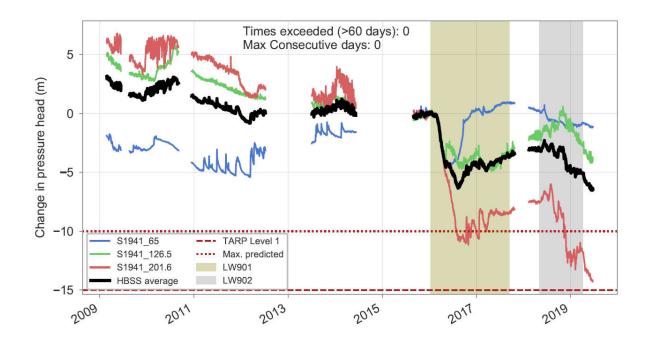


Bore	Observations	TARP Level
S2281 (Harris Ck 7)	S2281 is located 540 m south of Longwall 902, between Longwall 901 and the Nepean River. It has two sensors within the Hawkesbury Sandstone at 61 m and 99 m depth. Groundwater pressures at both sensors responded to the passage of Longwall 901, initially increasing (due to strata compression) as the longwall approached and then declining in August 2016 as the longwall moved away before stabilising in March 2017. A similar more subdued response was observed during the passage of Longwall 902. Pressure head declined by an average of 5.3 m for the Hawkesbury Sandstone during Longwall 901 and remained relatively stable or increased slightly during Longwall 902, although it is noted the logger batteries failed at the end of January 2019 prior to the completion of Longwall 902 in March 2019. Overall the pressure in S2281_61 remained approximately 25 m above the elevation of the Nepean River. The observed decline prior to the end of January 2019 is less than the predicted maximum reduction in groundwater level of 10 m.	Not triggered



Figure 7. Pressure head change hydrograph for S1913







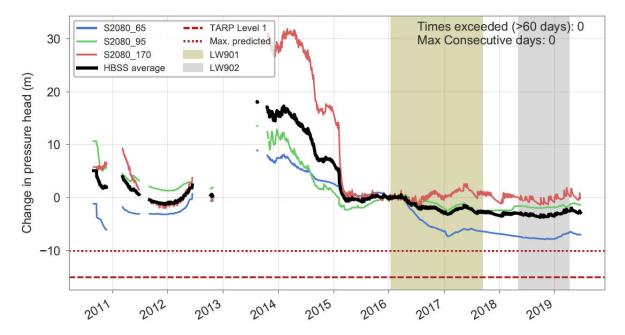


Figure 9. Pressure head change hydrograph for S2080



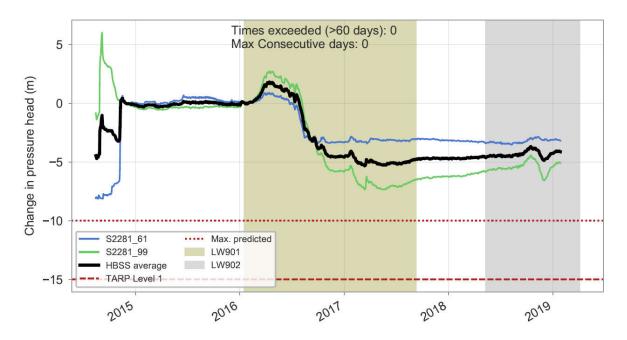


Figure 10. Pressure head change hydrograph for S2281

### 3.2 Groundwater chemistry

Groundwater samples are collected from four monitoring bores in the vicinity of AA9. Two bores (S1954, S2080) are sampled at multiple depths. Key groundwater quality parameters are summarised in Table 7 and water chemistry time-series plots are in Appendix 2. Groundwater in the Hawkesbury Sandstone is typically brackish (EC ~ 1400 to 6100  $\mu$ S/cm; TDS ~ 840 to 3660 mg/L) and near neutral in pH. In contrast, the Nepean River has water of low salinity (fresh; EC typically 140 to 460  $\mu$ S/cm; TDS 85 to 280 mg/L).

Time-series plots of key water quality parameters (Appendix 2) show no significant change in water quality as a result of mining at Longwalls 901 and 902. Groundwater quality samples were not collected at S2080 during or following the completion of mining at Longwall 902.

Site / depth	Statistic	Field EC (µS/cm)	Field pH	Na/CI (meq)
	P5%	2803	8.84	1.26
S1954_198m (Wianamatta Grp)	Median	2996	8.90	1.35
	P95%	3163	9.48	1.44
	P5%	2693	7.77	0.85
S1954_255m (Hawkesbury Sst)	Median	2860	7.91	0.93
	P95%	3068	8.42	0.99
	P5%	1337	6.83	N/A
S2080_158m (Hawkesbury Sst)	Median	1441	6.92	N/A
	P95%	1544	7.01	N/A

#### Table 7. Summary of groundwater quality near AA9



Site / depth	Statistic	Field EC (µS/cm)	Field pH	Na/CI (meq)
	P5%	5471	6.90	N/A
S2080_290m (Bulgo Sst)	Median	5660	6.95	N/A
(	P95%	5849	6.99	N/A
	P5%	3227	6.75	0.61
S2280_60m (Hawkesbury Sst)	Median	3600	6.87	0.73
	P95%	4550	7.07	0.82
	P5%	2143	6.48	0.55
S2281_60m (Hawkesbury Sst)	Median	5890	6.58	0.65
	P95%	7370	6.79	0.73
Noncan River	P5%	145	7.16	1.00
Nepean River (NR0, SW3 / NR1,	Median	275	7.89	1.61
NR2)	P95%	502	8.37	2.76



### 3.3 Private groundwater bores and dams

Pre and post-mining inspection of dams, boreholes and natural features above AA9 (set out in the Built Feature Management Plans) are conducted by the ICEFT with the consent of the relevant property/infrastructure owner and tenant. Significant changes or impacts are reported in the End of Panel Landscape Report (South32, 2017).

Post-mining inspections for Longwall 902 were undertaken at two properties: Lot 15 DP803255 and Lot 22 DP203255. A bore and a dam were inspected on Lot 15 DP 803255 and a bore was inspected on Lot 22 DP203255. The inspections included collection of in-situ water quality parameters and water samples for laboratory analysis.

Impacts to groundwater levels were reported for bore GW072249 on Lot 22 DP803255 following the extraction of Longwall 901. Groundwater quality results for the bore pre- and post-mining at longwalls 901 and 902 show an increasing trend in electrical conductivity from 2,680  $\mu$ s/cm to 3,570  $\mu$ s/cm. Increases in pH (7.33 to 8.24), dissolved oxygen (10.5 to 47.3 %sat) and total metals (aluminium, iron and manganese) were also observed. Ongoing monitoring is recommended to assess whether the changes in groundwater quality are likely to be associated with mining activities.

The pump in bore GW112437 on Lot 15 DP803255 was removed prior to Longwall 902 to prevent damage to the pump associated with potential shearing of the bore. Given the proximity of the bore to Longwall 902 and the depth of the bore, it is possible the bore has been impacted. However, this is yet to be determined through future investigations, including a pump test which is planned to determine possible yield reduction. Regular gas monitoring at the bore has indicated no detectable methane. Groundwater quality in the bore remained relatively stable before and after the extraction of Longwall 902.

Impacts to water quality in the dam on Lot 15 DP803255 were not observed, with water quality remaining relatively stable before and after extraction of Longwall 902. These impacts are further described in the End of Panel Landscape Report and in the relevant property reports. A Water Management Plan has been implemented for bore GW072249 on Lot 22 DP803255 in response to these impacts.

#### 3.4 Mine water balance

A daily water balance is maintained by South32. The balance tracks daily volumes of water pumped into the mine (supply), within the mine, and from the mine into storage and/or discharge. The rate of groundwater inflow to AA9 is determined by subtracting the estimated water supply volume (to AA9) from the total volume of water pumped to storage. Total mine inflow to AA9 is calculated from 31 July 2017.

The TARP level for mine inflow is based on the 20-day rolling average inflow to AA9, with level triggers listed in Table 2. A time-series of groundwater inflow to AA9 based on water balance calculations is shown in Figure 11, including the 20-day rolling mean and TARP trigger levels. No TARP was triggered during the reporting period.



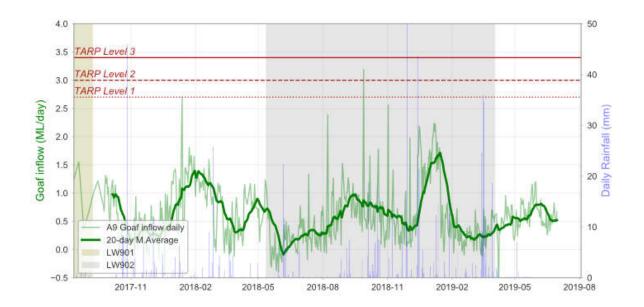


Figure 11. AA9 mine water balance



# 4. SURFACE WATER ASSESSMENT

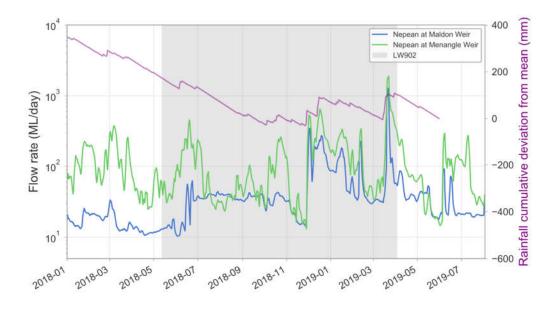
Observations and laboratory analyses of surface water level and chemistry are presented as timeseries plots (hydrographs) in Appendix 3.

### 4.1 Water level and flow

#### 4.1.1 Nepean River flow

The Water Management Plan recommends that flow in the Nepean River is monitored by assessing dry weather recession characteristics for the Maldon, Menangle and Broughtons Pass weirs, based on daily flow records from those sites, as for the AA7 monitoring reviews.

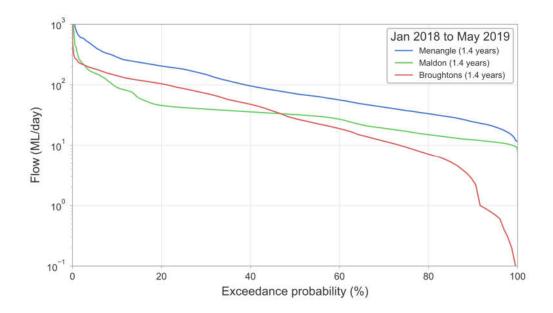
The recorded flow rates at Menangle Weir (downstream of AA9) and Maldon Weir (upstream of AA9) are plotted in Figure 12. The Nepean River is a gaining system in the vicinity of AA9 and therefore the flowrate increases downstream due to baseflow contributions and inflow from minor catchments along the reach. The flow at the Maldon Weir increases relative to flow in the downstream Menangle Weir from June 2018. The relative low-flow prior to June 2018 is likely due to abstractions above the weir during the prolonged dry period indicated by the declining cumulative rainfall deficit curve.





Flow duration curves for the Menangle and Maldon Weirs on the Nepean River and the Brounghtons Pass Weor on the Cataract River are plotted in Figure 13. These indicate that during the period of January 2018 to May 2019, including the period of LW902 extraction, there were no no-flow days recorded at any of the monitoring sites.





#### Figure 13. Flow duration curves for period Jan 2018 to May 2019

### 4.1.2 Pool water levels

Water levels are monitored at some pools during regular sampling events. Pool water levels are measured relative to a reference benchmark adjacent to the pool. Water levels are displayed as a time-series with other field observations in Appendix 3. The 5<sup>th</sup> to 95<sup>th</sup> percentile range for water levels measured during the pre-mining baseline period is also shown for reference.

Of the sites where water levels are measured, most show water levels during the reporting period that are within the baseline range. An exception is the Nepean River monitoring site NR0, which shows a decline in water level relative to the reference benchmark from the start of Longwall 901 throughout the reporting periods for Longwalls 901 and 902, with an overall decline in water level of 0.43 m from the baseline range. Water levels at site NR110 located 3.5 km further upstream of Longwalls 901 and 902 show a decline of less than 0.15 m from the baseline range over the same period. It is recommended that monitoring of water levels at NR0 and NR110 be continued to assess flow in the Nepean River.

### 4.2 Water chemistry

TARP levels for surface water chemistry parameters are listed in Table 2. Criteria for triggering response levels are based on both magnitude and duration. For example, a TARP Level 1 is triggered for pH at site NR0 if the pH at that location is lower than the baseline mean minus 1 standard deviation (at that location), for at least 2 consecutive months but less than 6 consecutive months. To facilitate comparison between sites with different sampling frequencies, each time-series is resampled to monthly, whereby a mean value is considered where there is more than one sampling event per month. In addition to the three nominated TARP sites for the Nepean River, the WMP recommends comparison with site NR110, located more than 3.5 km upstream of Longwalls 901 and 902.

Time-series plots of key water chemistry parameters are presented in Appendix 3. Analysis of the hydrographs in relation to the TARP criteria is provided in tabular format in Appendix 4 and summarised in

Table 8, below.



The reporting period for Longwall 902 is characterised by widely variable water quality in the Nepean River, with many parameters deviating by more than one or two standard deviations from the baseline mean on several occasions. During the reporting period, Level 1 and 2 TARP levels have been triggered for electrical conductivity (EC) at NR0, SW3(NR1) and NR2 and Level 1 TARP levels have been triggered for pH at NR0 and SW3(NR1). Although the observed increases in water salinity may be associated with the lower than average rainfall during 2017 and 2018, similar deviations from the baseline mean were not observed at the upstream control site NR110. The TARP level triggers occurred between May 2018 and March 2019 and surface water quality in the Nepean River has since returned to baseline levels.

The TARP levels for dissolved oxygen (DO) and iron (Fe) have not been triggered. Although the TARP levels for manganese (Mn) have been triggered, deviations from the baseline of a similar or greater magnitude are observed at the upstream control site and therefore the exceedances are not attributed to mining activities. Ongoing monitoring at all sites is recommended to assess the trends in water chemistry as mining progresses.

TARP Site	NR110 (Upstream control)	NR0 (Adjacent/ slightly upstream)	SW3/NR1 (Adjacent)	NR2 (Downstream)
EC	Below Level 1 criteria	Level 2 criteria in May and Jun 2018 and Level 1 criteria in Jul 2018 and Level 1 criteria in Oct and Nov 2018	Level 2 criteria in May and Jun 2018 and Level 1 criteria in Jul 2018 and Level 1 criteria in Oct and Nov 2018	Level 2 criteria in May and Jun 2018 and Level 1 criteria in Jul 2018 and Level 1 criteria in Oct and Nov 2018
pН	Below Level 1 criteria	Level 1 criteria from Nov 2018 to Mar 2019	Level 1 criteria in Dec 2018 and Jan 2019	Below Level 1 criteria
DO	Below Level 1 criteria	Below Level 1 criteria	Below Level 1 criteria	Below Level 1 criteria
Fe (Total)	Below Level 1 criteria	Below Level 1 criteria	Below Level 1 criteria	Below Level 1 criteria
Mn (Total)	Level 1 criteria in Nov and Dec 2018 and Feb and Mar 2019	Below Level 1 criteria	Level 1 criteria in Nov and Dec 2018	Below Level 1 criteria
Clarity / staining	None noted	None noted	None noted	None noted
TARP Level	Upstream Control Site	TARPs triggered for EC and pH.		

### Table 8. Summary of surface water TARP levels for reporting period

### 4.3 Gas emissions

Twenty-five gas release zones were identified in the Nepean River by the ICEFT during the monitoring period for Longwall 901. An additional six gas release zones were identified in the Nepean River during the monitoring period for Longwall 902. All 31 occurrences had estimated emission rates of <3000 L/min, and are classified as TARP Level 1. Gas emissions are described in detail in the End of Panel Landscape Reports for Longwall 901(South32, 2017) and Longwall 902 (South32, 2019). The locations of the emissions are shown in Figure 2 in the End of Panel Landscape Report for Longwall 902 (South32, 2019).

The following actions were initiated in response to the Level 1 triggers, in accordance with the WMP:



- Continue monitoring program
- Submit an Impact Report to relevant stakeholders
- Report in the End of Panel Report
- Summarise actions and monitoring in the AEMR.



# **5. CONCLUSIONS**

An assessment of groundwater and surface water monitoring data was carried out to assess the potential impacts from mining of Longwall 902 at Appin Colliery, in accordance with the WMP. The following conclusions are made:

#### Groundwater assessment

- A decline in groundwater pressure occurred in the Hawkesbury Sandstone at monitoring bore S1941, located 630 m from Longwall 902. The observed groundwater pressure reductions are within the predicted range for the upper two sensors and greater than the predicted range for the lower sensor (but less than the level 1 TARP). No significant change in groundwater chemistry is noted for the reporting period.
- An impact to a bore was recorded at one private property; a WMP has been implemented in response to the impact.
- Groundwater inflow to the mine is calculated from the daily mine water balance. The 20-day
  moving average mine inflow fluctuated between ~1.7 and 0 ML/day following the extraction of
  Longwall 902, below the TARP Level 1 trigger of 2.7 ML/day.

#### Surface water assessment

- Monitoring of Nepean River gauging weirs at Maldon and Menangle of Cataract River at Broughtons Pass showed that there were no no-flow days recorded for the period since January 2018 and after LW902 extraction.
- Monthly monitoring by South32 indicates a decline in pool water levels at site NR0 of 0.43 m from the baseline range. Water levels at the upstream site show a decline of less than 0.15 m from the baseline range over the same period. Ongoing monitoring at NR0 and NR110 is recommended.
- The Longwall 902 reporting period was characterised by widely variable water quality in the Nepean River. During the reporting period, Level 1 and 2 TARP levels have been triggered for electrical conductivity at NR0, SW3(NR1) and NR2 and Level 1 TARP levels have been triggered for pH at NR0 and SW3(NR1). Although the observed increases in water salinity may be due to the unusually low rainfall during 2017 and 2018, similar deviations from the baseline mean were not observed at the upstream control site NR110. The TARP triggers occurred between May 2018 and March 2019 and surface water quality in the Nepean River has since returned to baseline levels. Twenty-five gas release zones were identified in the Nepean River during the monitoring period for Longwall 901. An additional six gas release zones were identified in the Nepean River during the monitoring period for Longwall 902. All 31 occurrences had estimated emission rates of <3000 L/min, and triggered a TARP Level 1 response under the WMP.</p>



# 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There are no recommendations for this reporting period.



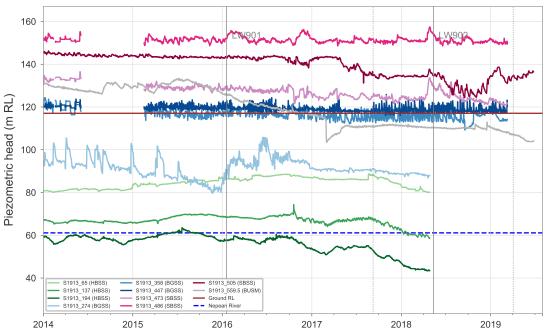
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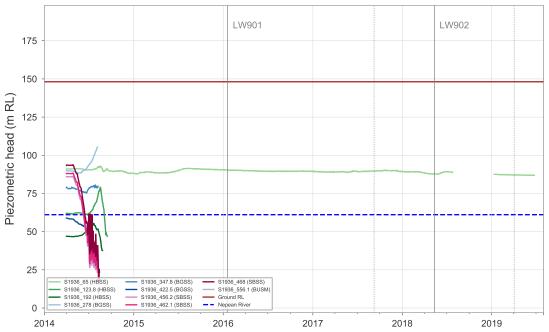


# **APPENDIX I – Groundwater bore hydrographs**

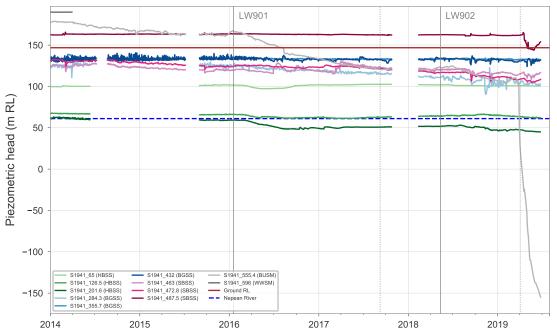
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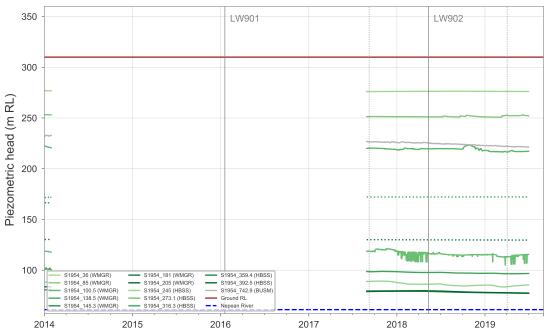


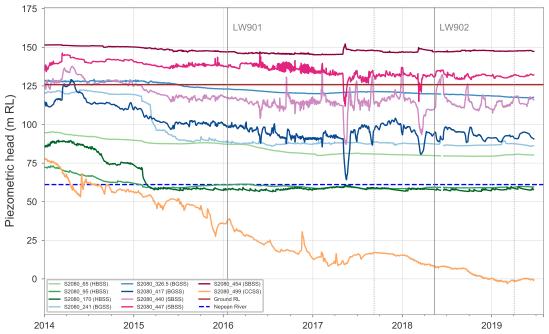
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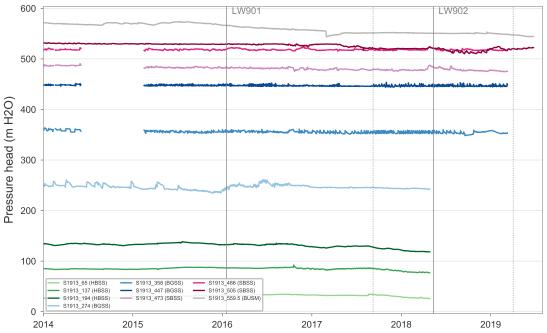


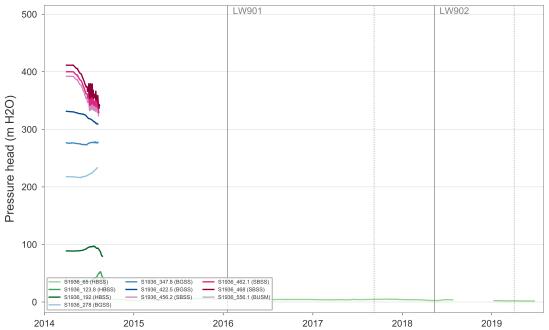


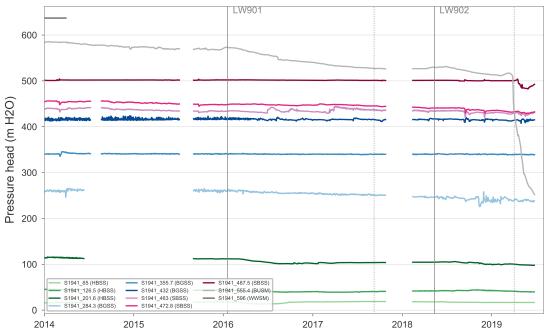


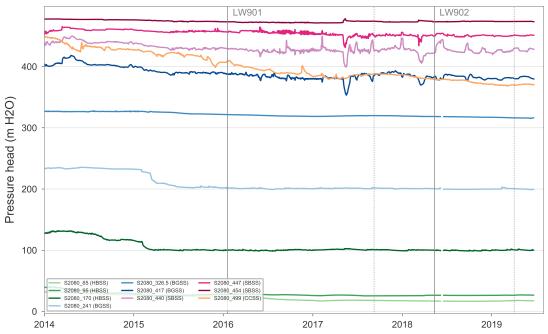


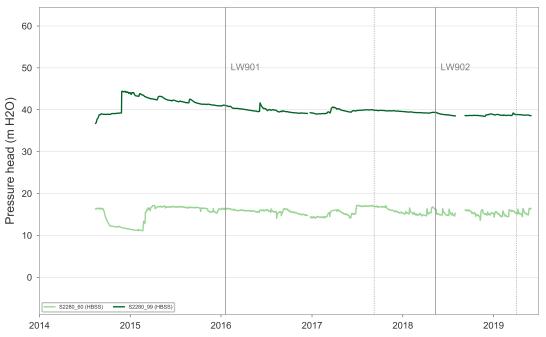








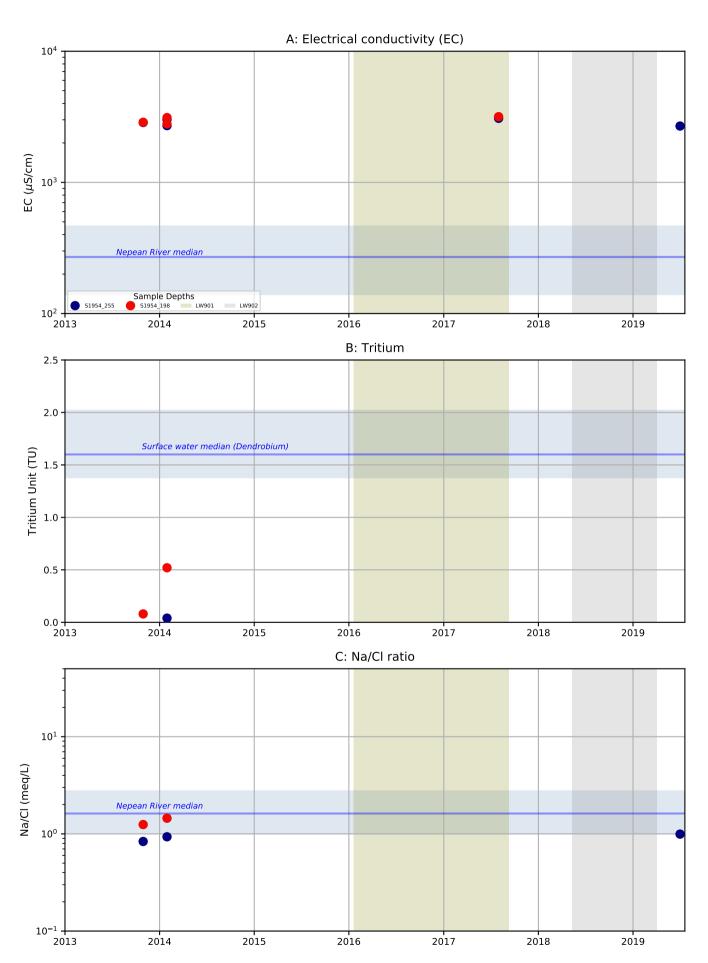




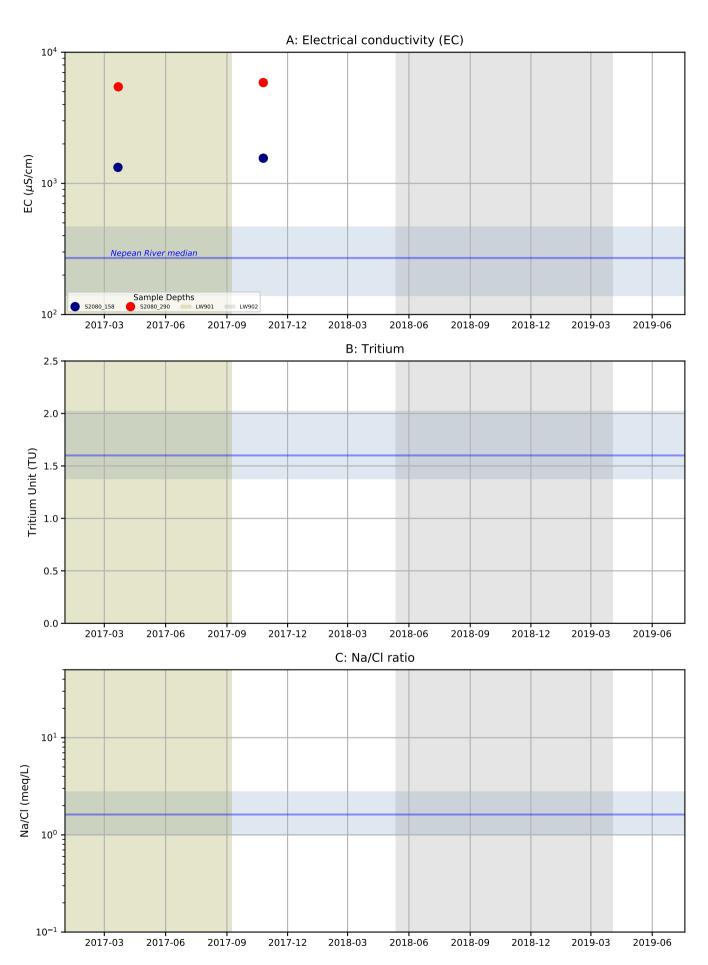




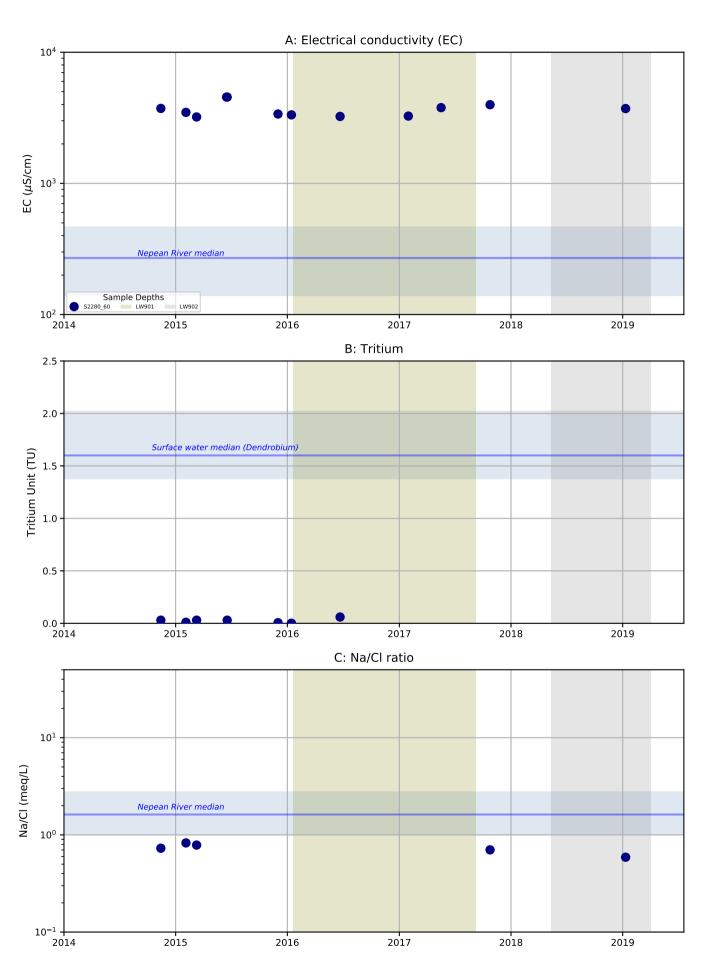
## **APPENDIX 2 – Groundwater chemistry time-series plots**





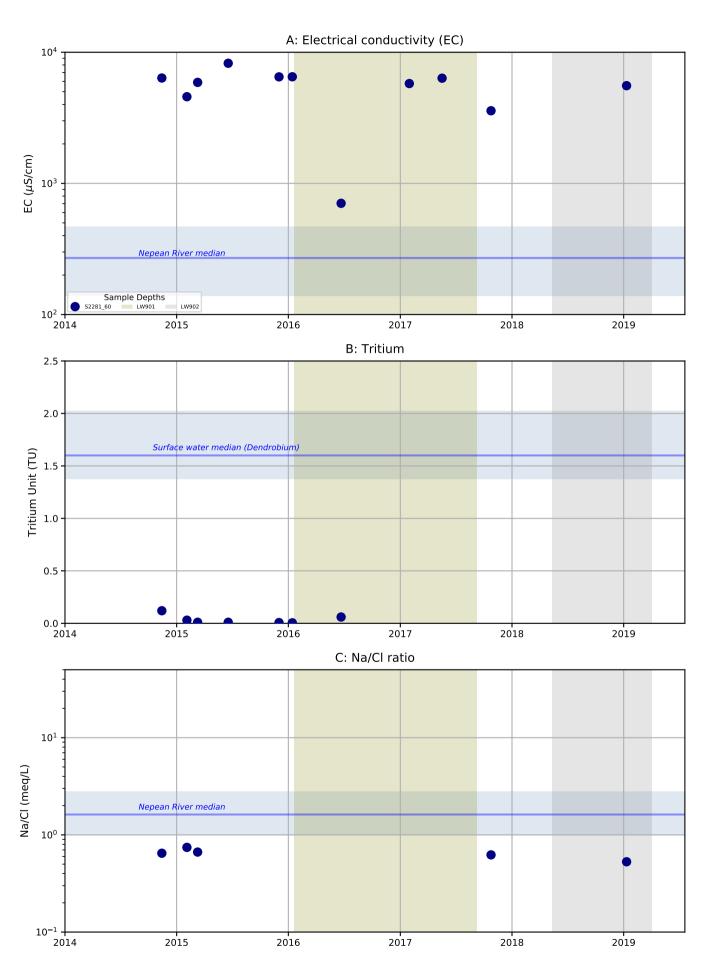






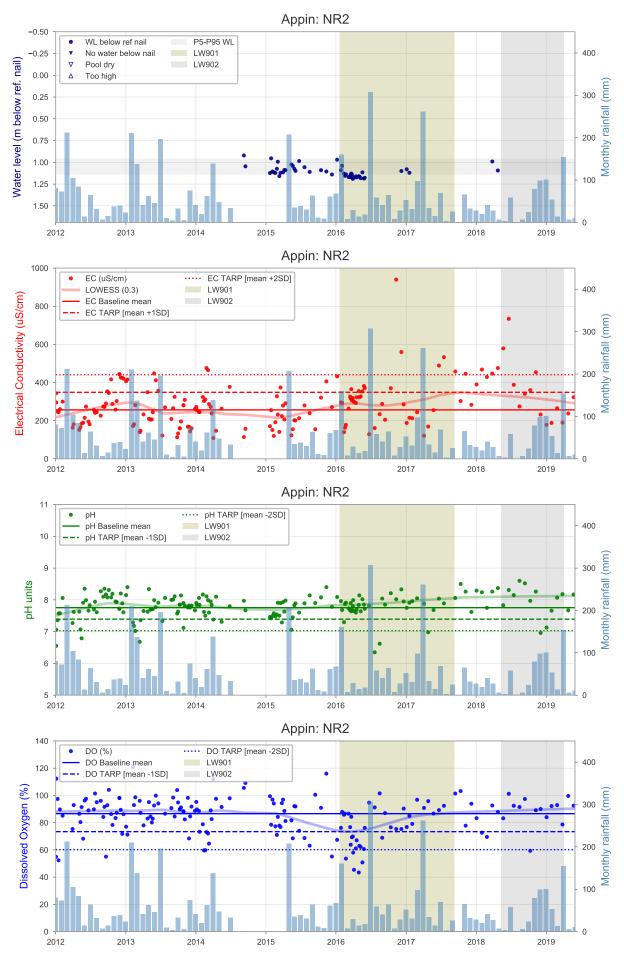


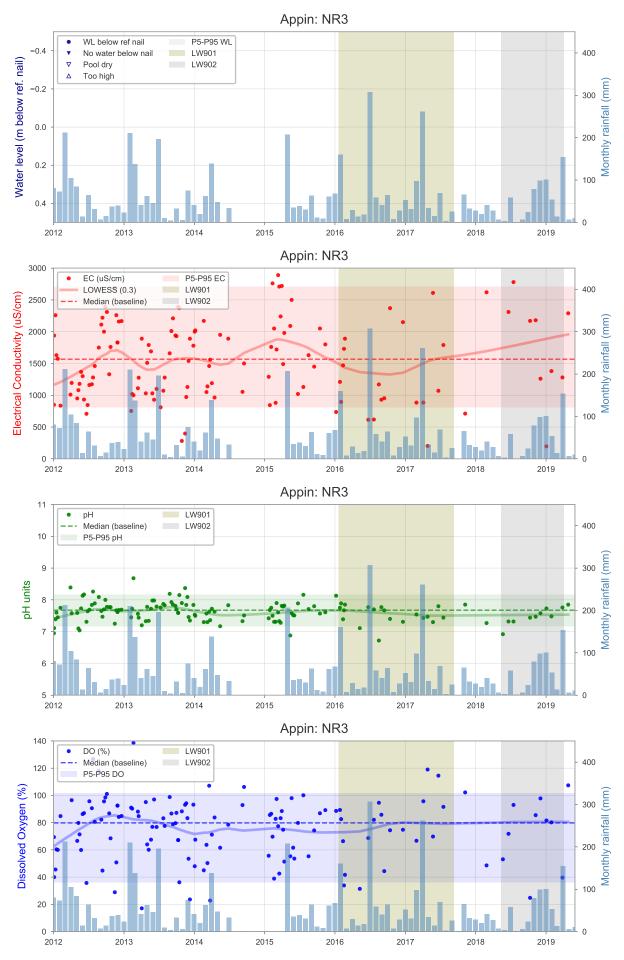
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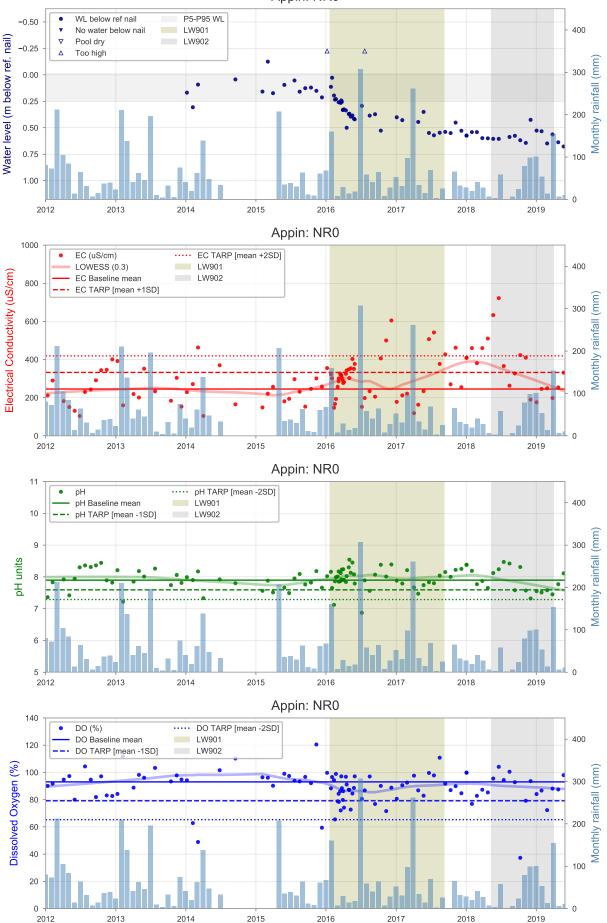




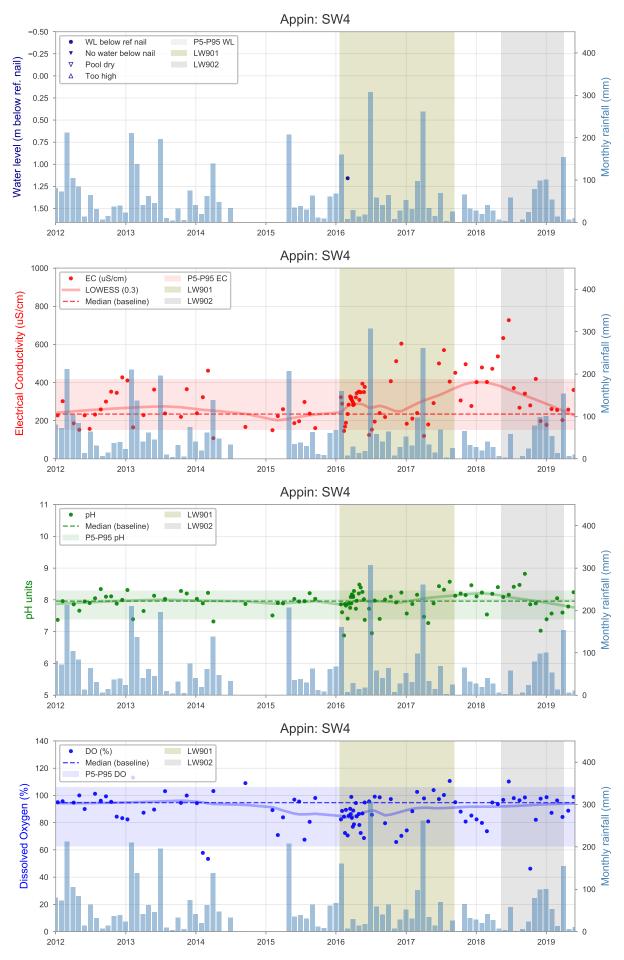
# **APPENDIX 3 – Surface water chemistry time-series plots**

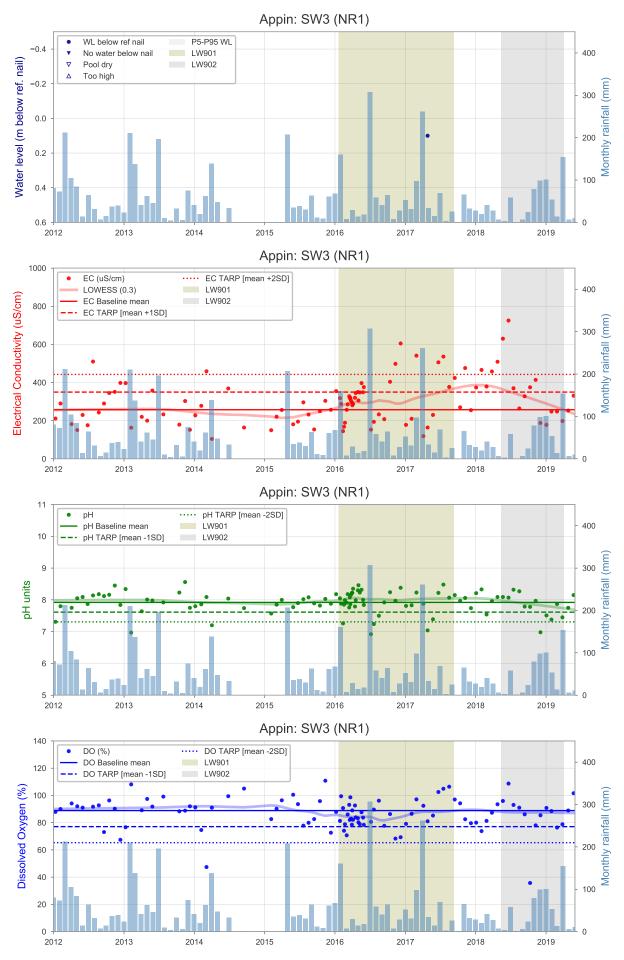


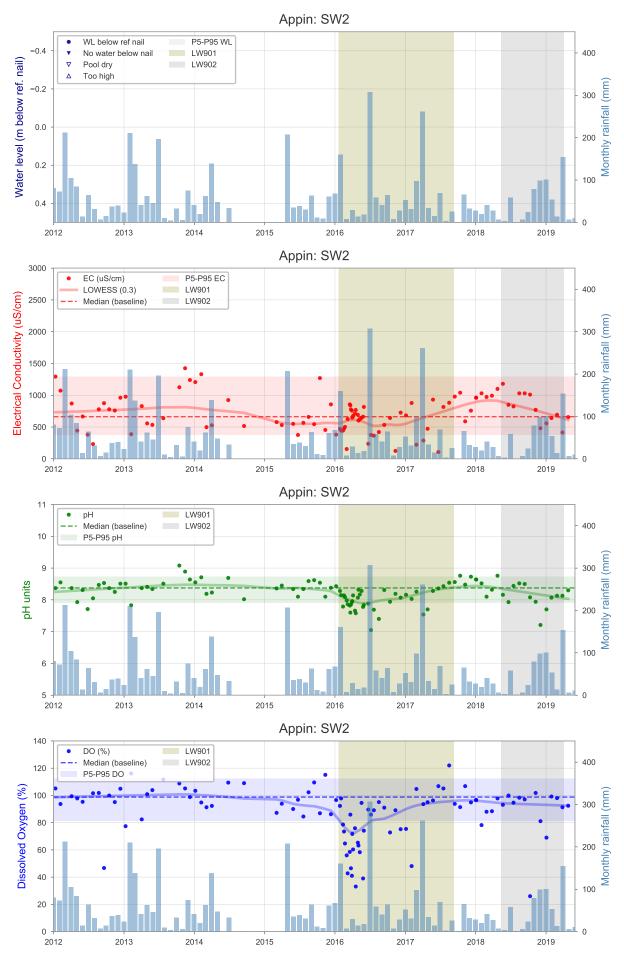


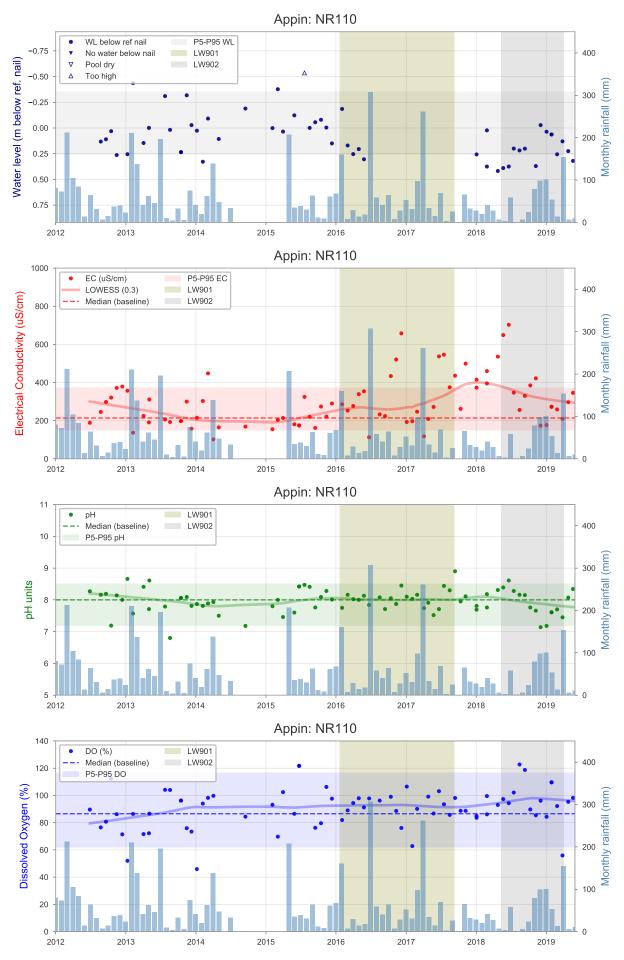


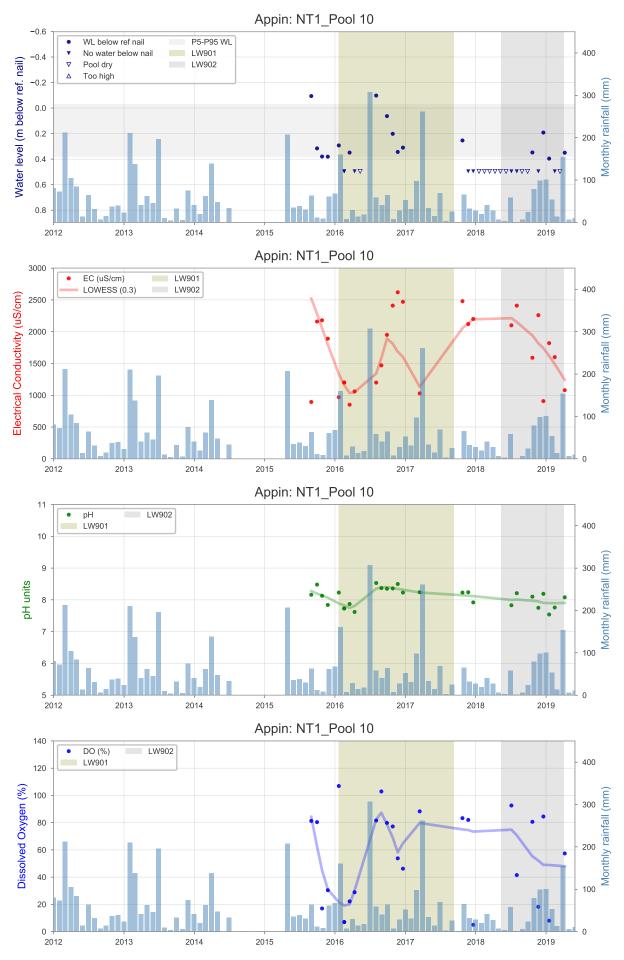
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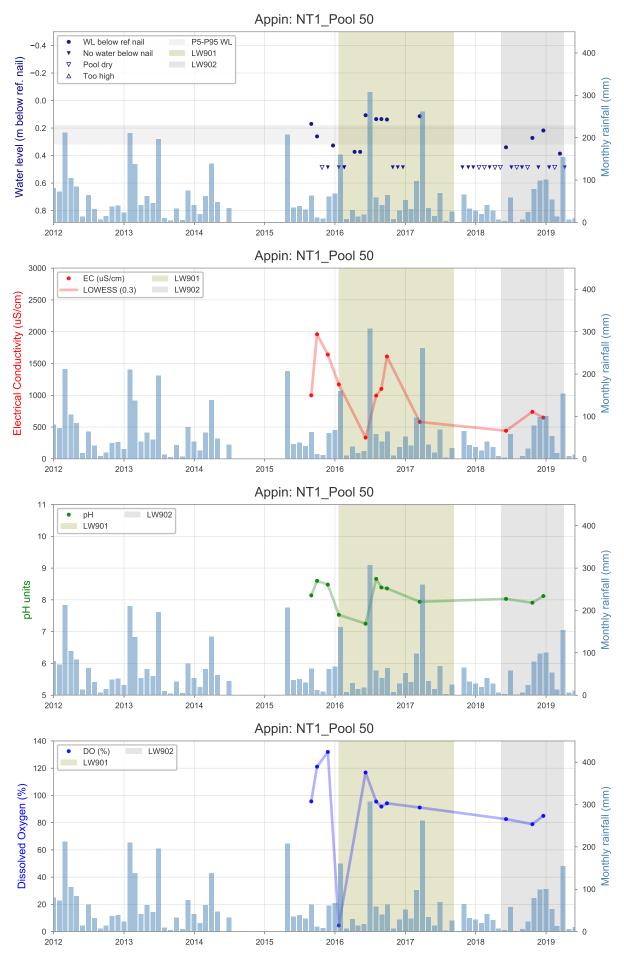


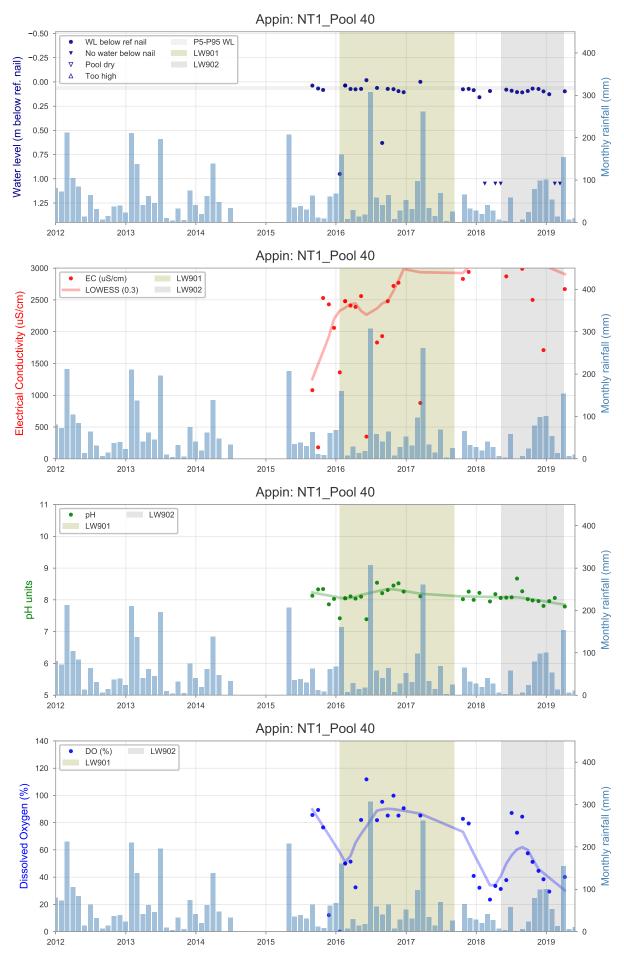


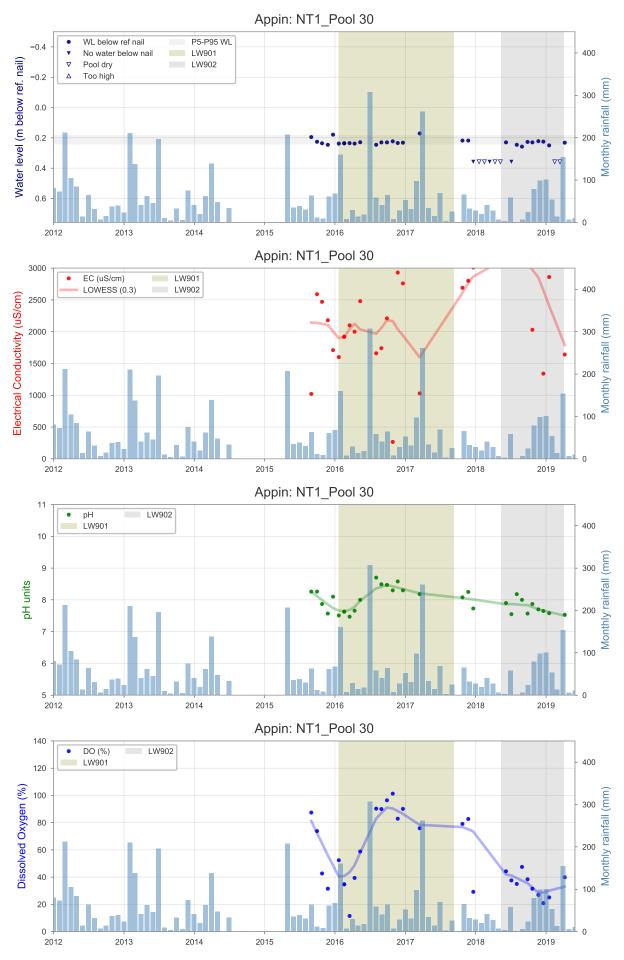


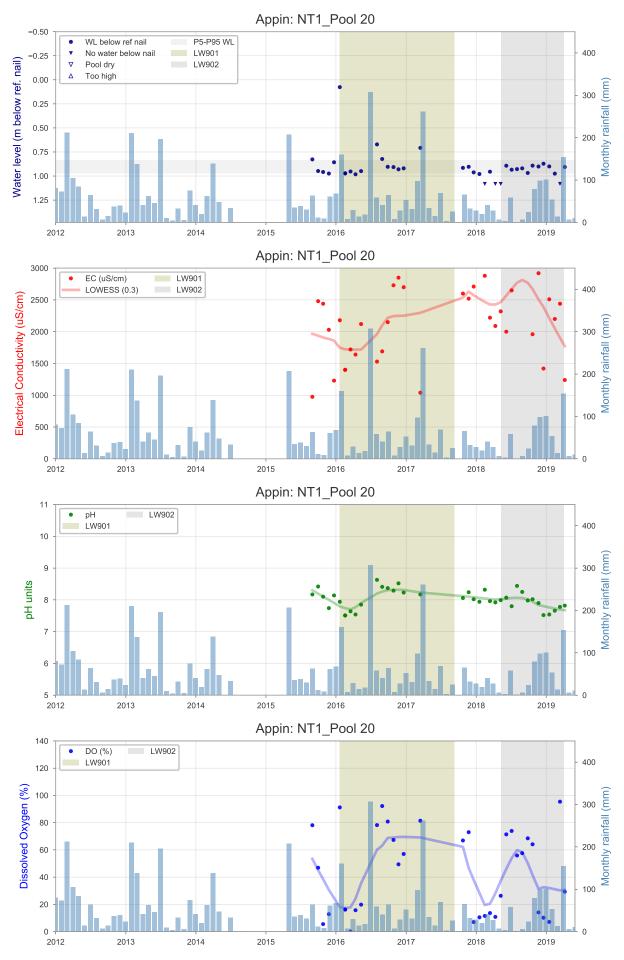


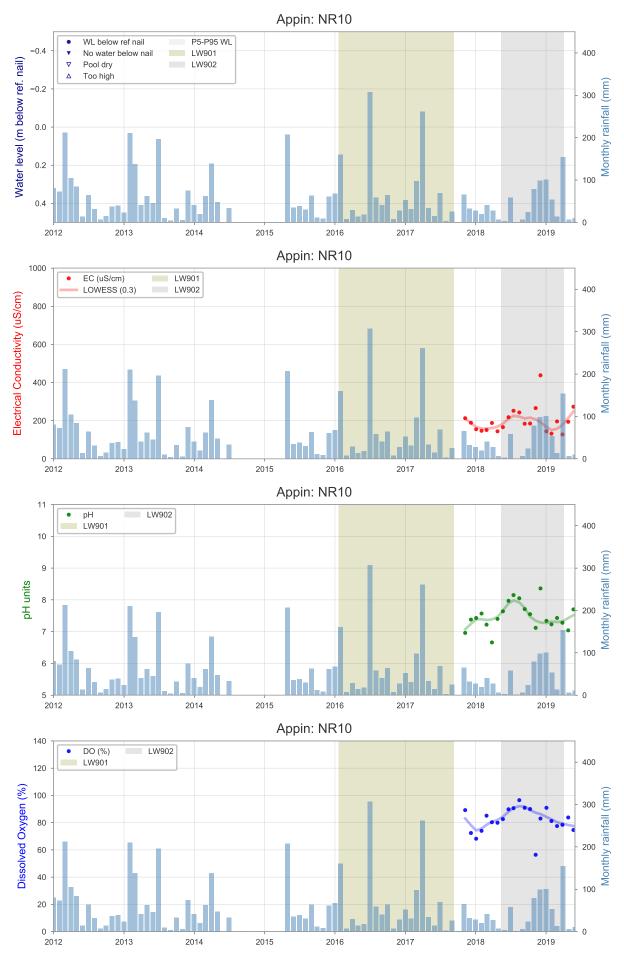


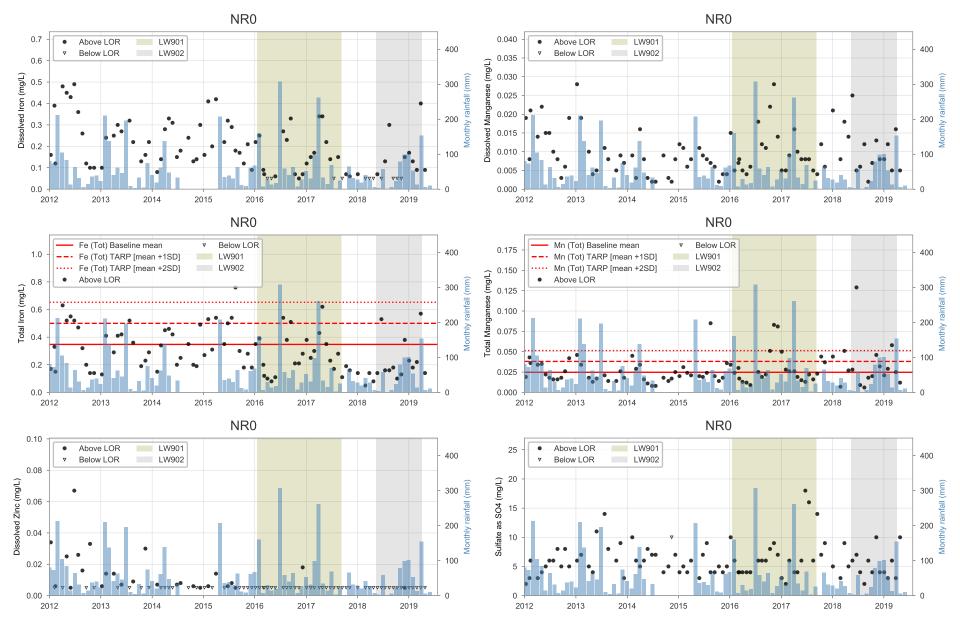


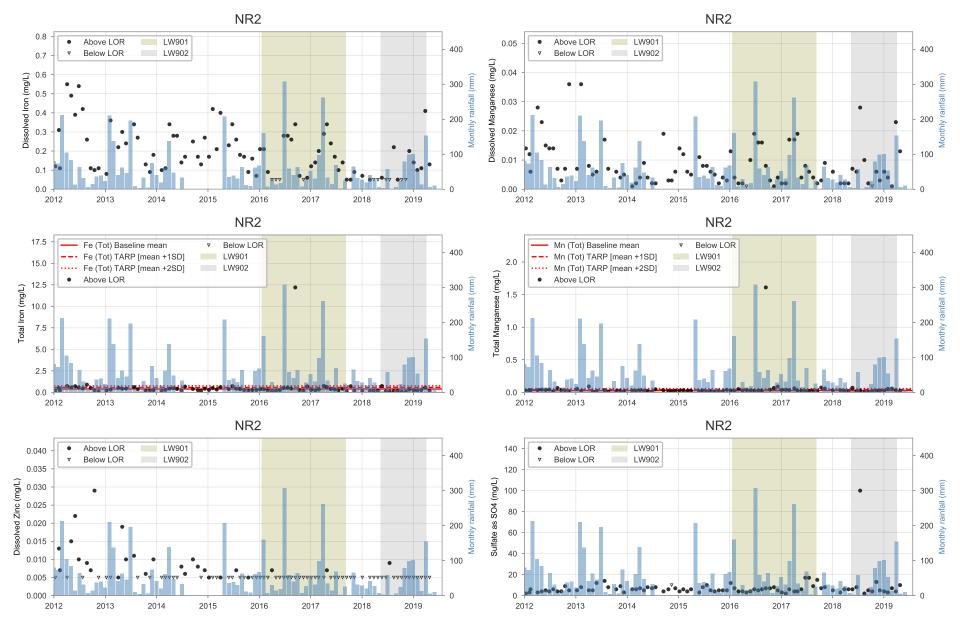


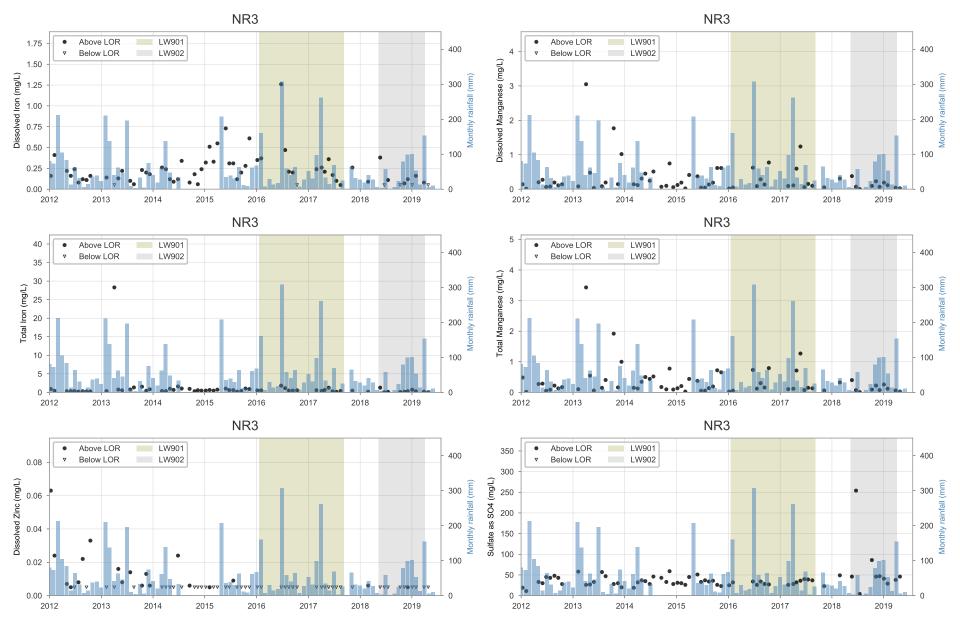


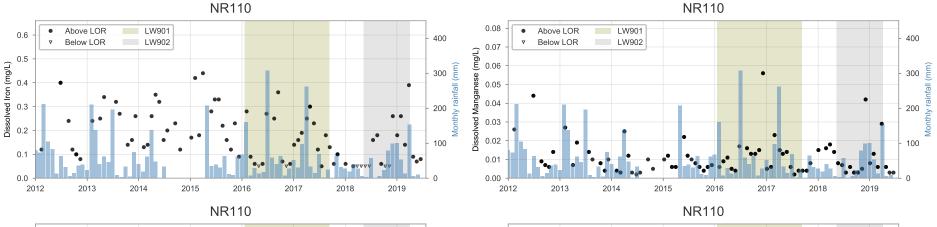


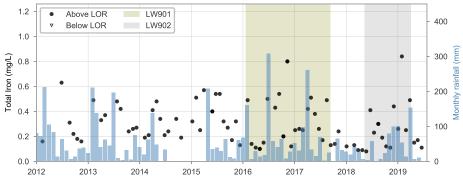


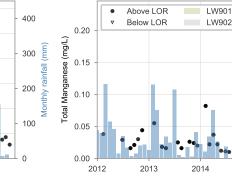


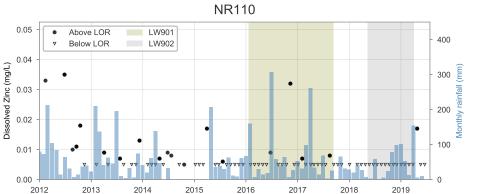


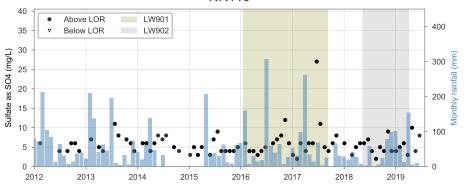






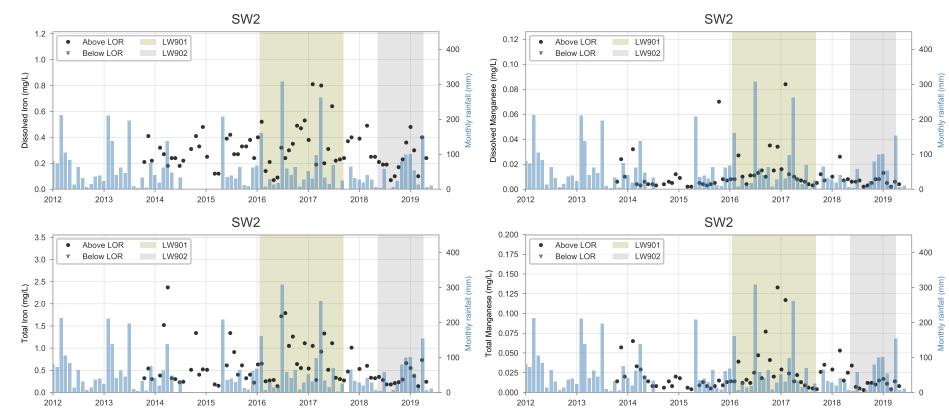




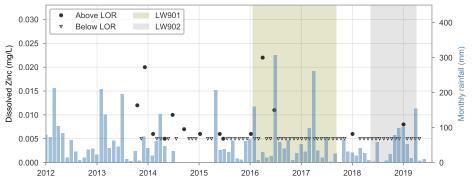


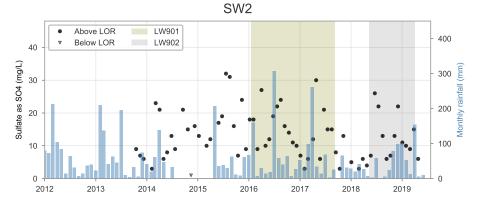
NR110

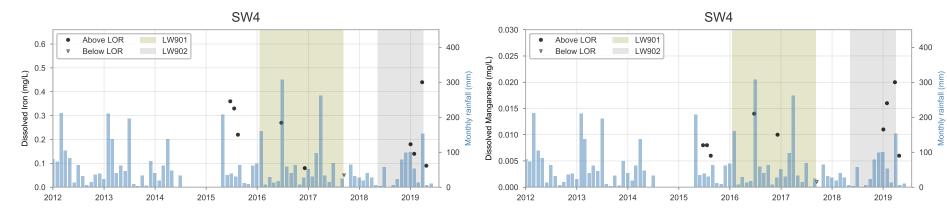
Monthly rainfall (mm)



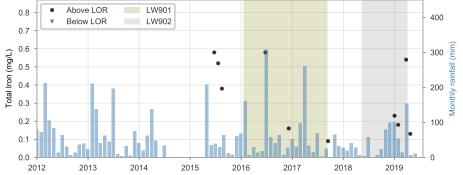
SW2

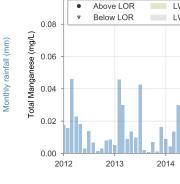


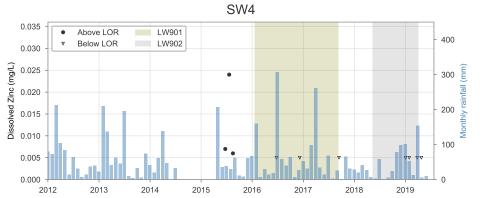


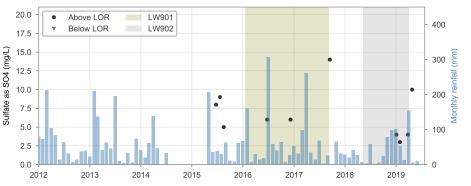


SW4

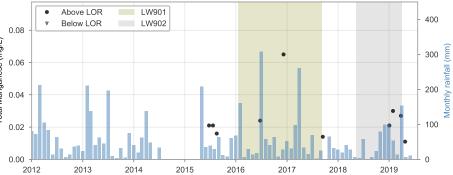








SW4



SW4



# **APPENDIX 4 – Surface water chemistry TARP summary**

]	NR0					SW3(NR1)					NR2					NR110				
Date	EC	рН	DO	Fe_tot	Mn_tot	EC	рН	DO	Fe_tot	Mn_tot	EC	pН	DO	Fe_tot	Mn_tot	EC	pН	DO	Fe_tot	Mn_tot
31/10/2015	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
30/11/2015					0					0	1					0				0
31/12/2015			2		0			1		0			2			0				0
31/01/2016	1				0					1	1		1			0				0
29/02/2016					0					0						0			1	0
31/03/2016					0					0			1			0				0
30/04/2016					0					0			2			0				0
31/05/2016	1				0	1				0	1		1			0				0
30/06/2016					0	0		0		0		0				0			1	0
31/07/2016		1		1	0		2		1	0		2				0				0
31/08/2016		1			0		1			0		1		0		0				0
30/09/2016			1	1	0				1	0				2	2	0			1	0
31/10/2016	1				1	1				2	1				0	0			0	1
30/11/2016	2		1		2	2		1		2	2			0	2	0			2	2
31/12/2016	2				2	2		1		2	1			1	2	0				2
31/01/2017					1	0				0						0				0
28/02/2017					0	1				0						0				0
31/03/2017		0		0	0		0		0	0				0	0	0			0	0
30/04/2017		1		1	0		1		1	0				1	1	0			1	0
31/05/2017 30/06/2017	0				0	0	1			0	0	0				0				0
	2 2				0	2 2				0	2 2					0				0
31/07/2017 31/08/2017	2				0	2				0		0				0			1	1
30/09/2017	2				0	1				0	0	0				0			0	0
31/10/2017	0				1	0				0	0	0		1	2	0				0
30/11/2017	2				0	2				1	2	0		0	2	0				1
31/12/2017	0				0	0				0	0	0			0	0				0
31/01/2018	2				1	1		1		2	1					0				1
28/02/2018	1				0	1	1	0		0	1		1			0				1
31/03/2018	2				1	2				2	2					0				0
30/04/2018	2				0	2				0	2					0				0
31/05/2018	2				0	2				0	2			1	2	0				0
30/06/2018	2			1	2	2				0	2					0				2
31/07/2018	1				0	1				0	1					0				0
31/08/2018					0					0						0				0
30/09/2018		1			0					0						0				0
31/10/2018	2		2		0	1		2		0	1		2			0				0
30/11/2018	1	1			1	1				2	2					0				1
31/12/2018		1			0		2			1		2				0				2
31/01/2019		1			0		1			0						0			1	0
28/02/2019		1	1		2			1		2					1	0				1
31/03/2019		1		1	0		1		1	0						0			1	1
30/04/2019					0					0						0				0
31/05/2019	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

LEGEND

Longwall 901 Longwall 902