

# The Proposed Colton Coal Mine and the Great Sandy Ramsar Site

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Mary River

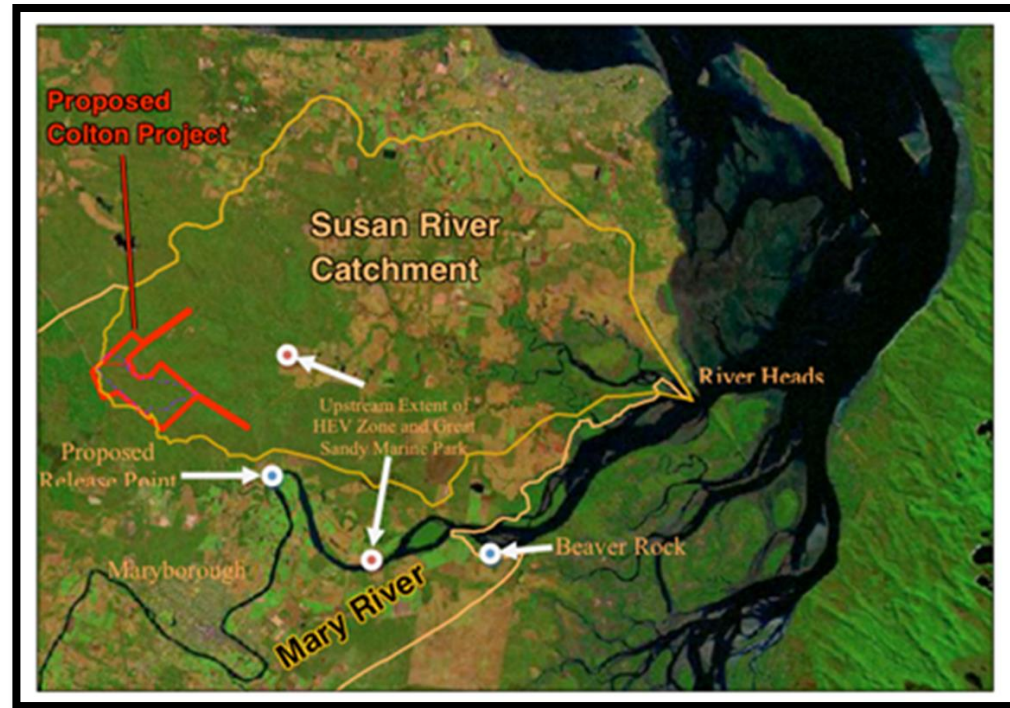
Susan River

Proposed  
Colton Mine

Photo: Nikki Michail

# Key Facts about the Colton Mine

- First proposed in 2009
- Qld Govt approval in 2017
- 8km from Maryborough
- Owned by New Hope Coal
- 0.5 Mtpa of export coking coal (expansion possible)
- Affects the Susan River and Mary River

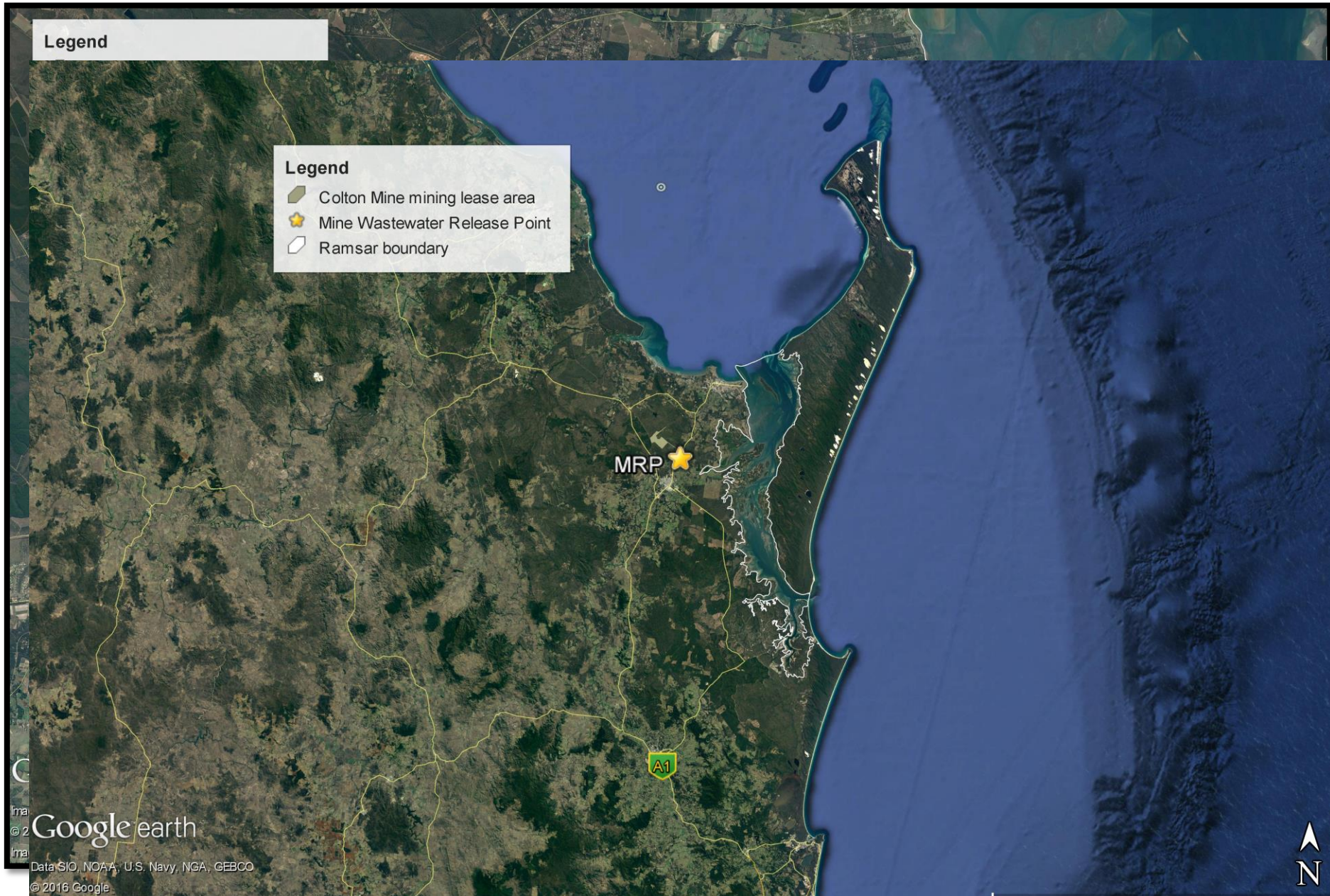


Source: New Hope Coal

*"The Susan River catchment is notable for its intact connectivity between estuarine and freshwater systems which is important for diadromous fish migration." Queensland Government, 2011*



# Getting a sense of scale on the project



# What are the issues with the mine?

1. Regular discharge of **heavy metal contaminated untreated waste water** into the Mary River
  - Up to 5.8% of the daily flow
  - Due to Acid Mine Drainage it is acidic (low pH) and contains heavy metals
  - Releases to the river contain concentrations of heavy metals above 80<sup>th</sup> percentile background levels
    - Cobalt – **six times**
    - Cadmium – **nine times**
    - Manganese – **sixteen times**
    - Selenium – **twenty nine times**
  - Concentrations of Cobalt, Cadmium and Manganese will exceed *High Environmental Value* safety guideline levels

# What are the issues with the mine ?

2. Risk of **uncontrolled discharge** of heavy metal contaminated untreated waste water into the Susan
  - Dams storing the wastewater have been under designed
    - Current design: 1 in 20 year critical wet season, 1 in 10 year storm
    - Previous design: 1 in 100 year critical wet season, 1 in 100 year storm
  - Wastewater exceeds High Environmental Value guidelines for 11 heavy metals, e.g.
    - Manganese **680 times** the guideline
    - Chromium **940 times** the guideline
    - Cadmium **340 times** the guideline
  - Dilution is not a solution
    - Mean annual runoff of the mine catchment is 4 ML. Volume of the Mine Water dam is 678 ML.

# What are the issues with the mine ?

## 3. Environmental authority allows a **void to be left behind**

- 111ha in area and up to 50m deep

## 4. **Inadequate monitoring** required in the Environmental Authority granted by the Qld Government

- No sediment monitoring
- No monitoring of the Susan River
- No ecological monitoring

# In Summary

- New Hope's own modeling shows that the mine will worsen water quality in the Great Sandy Strait Ramsar Wetland
- Consequences for the food web, interconnected habitats, processes and threatened species in the Great Sandy Strait have not been assessed
- If the mine proceeds the monitoring required in the Qld Government issued Environmental Authority is unlikely to detect impacts on the ecosystem



# Process to date

- 2007 – Northern Energy Corporation (NEC) propose project
- 2010 – Commonwealth decides “not a controlled action”
- 2011 – New Hope Coal take over NEC
- 2012 - Public comment period on the EMP (State Govt)
- 2014 - Environmental Management Plan approved, draft environmental authority granted
- November 2016 – AADAM lose Court Case
- December 2016 – MRCCC submitted request for reconsideration
- December 2016 – Environmental Authority Granted by Minister Miles
- 2017 – Mining Lease Granted by Minister Lynham
- March 2017 – Public Comment Period on the request for reconsideration – 1800+ submissions
- 29 September 2017 – Notified by delegate of Minister Frydenberg that 2010 “not a controlled action” decision stands
- 13 October 2017 – Received legal advice from EDO and Independent Barrister that judicial review of decision unlikely to be successful because no “legal error”





*We've done it before, we can do it again*