

Response to Sydney Morning Herald on interim protocol to site verification and mapping of biophysical strategic agricultural land

Currently, the mapping of biophysical strategic agricultural land in the Upper Hunter and New England North West plan is at a regional scale. It generally doesn't allow a property by property analysis.

The protocol is a technical document which assists proponents and landholders understand what is required to identify the existence of BSAL on the ground.

The need to verify BSAL land at the local property boundary level is clearly stated in the Strategic Regional Land-Use plans and the proposed and exhibited Mining State environmental planning policy amendment for the gateway process.

The protocol will apply to proponents for State significant development proposals for coal or coal seam gas who want to seek verification of whether or not their proposal is located on BSAL.

It will also be used by a landowner anywhere in the State who choose to verify whether or not their land is BSAL in circumstances where a written notice of an intention to obtain an access arrangement has been served or an access arrangement in relation to the land has been agreed or determined (only where the land is not subject to a pending development application for mining or petroleum development).

The Department of Trade and Investment is currently undertaking a regional-scale verification process for the mapped Critical Industry Clusters (CICs).

This exercise involves field work and extensive consultation with landowners and industry