

MT ARTHUR COAL COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting (22)

- Location:** Drayton Mine Boardroom
- Date:** Thursday 16 February 2012
- Present:** Martin Rush (MR) Chairperson, Jennifer Lecky (JL) Resident, John Bancroft (JB) Resident, Raymond Webb (RW) Resident, Craig Flemming (CF) Muswellbrook Shire Council, Bruce MacPherson (BM) Resident, Scott Mitchell (SM) Mt Arthur Coal, Rebecca Smith (RS) Mt Arthur Coal, Julie McNaughton (JM) Mt Arthur Coal.
- Apologies:** Eddie Constable (EC) Resident.
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Meeting Commenced: 4:05pm

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

MR welcomed everyone to the Mt Arthur Coal Community Consultative Committee (CCC) February 2012 meeting and apologies were received.

2. HOUSEKEEPING AND SAFETY

James Benson (JB), Drayton Mine, provided information on general housekeeping and safety, this included:

- entry/exit
- emergency procedure
- muster area
- amenities
- tea/coffee.

JB then left the meeting.

3. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

No pecuniary interests were declared.

4. STRUCTURE AND LAYOUT OF REHABILITATION & BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT PLAN

SM stated that the purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview of key components and layout of the draft Rehabilitation & Biodiversity Management Plan (RBMP) and outline the process going forward SM advised a copy was posted to all CCC members.

5. ALIGNMENT WITH I & I GUIDELINES AND LINK TO REHABILITATION STRATEGY

SM presented the context of the Rehabilitation & Biodiversity Management Plan noting that a number of other documents and requirements were factored into the RBMP including:

- Mt Arthur Coal Consolidation Project Approval;
- the Mt Arthur Coal Consolidation Project Environmental Assessment 2009;
- Mt Arthur Coal Rehabilitation Strategy,
- compatible and final land use objectives;
- various government and industry standards; and

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- other relevant Mt Arthur Coal standards, policies and procedures.

In addition, SM explained that the Rehabilitation & Biodiversity Management Plan consistent with the Rehabilitation Strategy, factoring in conditions 40 and 44 of the Project Approval, and taking into account Mt Arthur Coal's wish to continuously improve rehabilitation practices.

6. LANDUSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES (SM)

The objectives of the Rehabilitation & Biodiversity Management Plan are to:

- Provide a framework to assess rehabilitation on a trajectory towards a sustainable post-mining land use;
- Provide a guide and framework for offset management practices to enhance ecological values;
- Establish performance and completion criteria for each phase of the rehabilitation and biodiversity management program;
- Ensure structural stability, revegetation success and containment of wastes;
- Develop a post-mining land use compatible with surrounding land uses and provide both environmental and community benefits; and
- Re-establish 500 hectares of Box-Gum Grassy Woodland.

SM presented the conceptual stages to achieve sustainable ecosystem development, that would lead from defining sustainable land use to the achievement of sustainable land use, noting that it was a process of continuous improvement. Also reference made to the importance of good monitoring on an ongoing basis as part of the information feedback loop to improve rehabilitation practices was highlighted.

SM presented information on threatened species that were a key area of focus and related to condition 40 of the Project Approval:

- Re-establishment of significant and/or threatened plant communities, including:
 - Upper Hunter White Box – Ironbark Grassy Woodland;
 - Central Hunter Box – Ironbark Woodland;
 - Central Hunter Ironbark – Spotted Grey-Gum Box Forest;
 - Narrabeen Foothills Slaty Box Woodland;
 - Hunter Floodplain Red Gum Woodland Complex;
- Re-establishment of significant and/or threatened plant species or populations, including:
 - Lobed Blue-Grass (*Bothriochloa biloba*);
 - Tiger Orchid (*Cymbidium canaliculatum*);
 - Weeping Myall (*Acacia pendula*);
- Re-establishment of habitat for significant and/or threatened fauna species.

SM displayed a plan of existing vegetation communities, noting that the collection of native seeds for use in later rehabilitation had already commenced.

SM displayed a draft plan of proposed land use, demonstrating links with the Rehabilitation Strategy.

BM enquired what the slope was planned to be for the woodland proposed for the Mt Arthur Coalleans Hill area shown.

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SM replied that it would be a slope of 10 degrees.

CF asked BM what slope he thought would be appropriate.

BM responded that he wouldn't put trees on a 10 degree slope. He would use this slope for grazing.

JM noted that due to the EA and other commitments this area had to be woodland.

BM noted that other commitments had been changed in the past.

MR queried what was being reinstated in the Ramrod creek area near the industrial estate.

SM responded conservation and offset area.

Discussion arose about the clarity of the colour scheme to indicate different land uses on the plan shown.

JM noted that the figure was a draft and the colour scheme could be changed for better clarity.

MR enquired which way the water flowed in the plan shown.

JM responded that generally water to the north side of Mt Arthur flowed north, with the remainder flowing south west.

JB queried why the EA boundary was not around the offset area shown.

JM responded that this is because the conservation area is not within the operational boundary, and that any impact is likely to be positive. JM noted that conservation areas do not need to be within the EA boundary and that the use of areas outside the boundary could often provide better conservation security..

JB noted that there were once plans for a mine in the offset area by the industrial estate and questioned whether this could be pursued in the future by Mt Arthur Coal.

JM replied that Mt Arthur Coal had no mining or exploration lease in this area.

MR noted that there were no exploration leases for this particular location in question.

7. **DOMAINS, COMPLETION CRITERIA AND MONITORING**

SM presented an example of a table showing performance criteria and goals for growing media development to demonstrate what is to be expected in this section of the RBMP.

MR questioned why the performance measure for the example shown could not be a relative measure such as the post-mining soil must be a higher classification or category than the pre-mining soil.

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CF suggested that before land is disturbed soil structure should be analysed with the aim of reconstructing this structure post mining.

MR enquired why the measure can't simply be that the soil must be better than before, whatever classification is used.

SM noted that the example did not reference land or soil capability classes, which are outlined in the MOP, and that soil ameliorants will assist to achieve improved soil condition.

MR suggested that the performance measure needed to say what the standard needs to be.

JM noted as shown in the EA, there are some areas where soil quality post mining won't be as good as pre mining.

BM questioned why. Was this because it couldn't be topsoiled?

JM responded yes. Some areas would be too steep (for example final voids).

BM asked if the voids were not topsoiled would they erode into the void.

JM responded potentially if they are not stabilised.

SM noted that soil classes were outlined in the EA and also referenced in the Rehabilitation & Biodiversity Management Plan, including physical and chemical properties and soil classes and soil types.

MR suggested that the performance standard could be tied back to the EA.

SM noted that the example shown was only one example and that the full table in the Rehabilitation & Biodiversity Management Plan should satisfy the CCC as it has additional detail for performance indicators.

SM presented some examples of landform establishment showing performance criteria and indicators.

SM presented some examples of soil r management strategies from prior to stripping, during soil stripping, stockpiling and during the rehabilitation program.

MR asked to return to the topic of landform establishment and asked if the minimisation of constructed slopes greater than 10 per cent in the Rehabilitation Strategy was included in the Rehabilitation & Biodiversity Management Plan.

SM responded that it was except in the area of final voids where steeper slopes will exist.

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CF asked if the current dumps at Mt Arthur Coal were at 10 degrees.

JM replied that they weren't dumped at 10 degrees. Trucks were not able to dump at a 10 degree slope but they dump at the angle of repose (approximately 37 degrees) and the steps in the dump profile are then pushed down to cut and fill to 10 degrees.

SM presented an example of ecosystem and land use establishment which outlines performance criteria within the draft RBMP.

BM noted that on page 40 of the draft Rehabilitation & Biodiversity Management Plan it noted that soils could be treated with effluent. BM asked if this would be amongst trees or on grazing land, given the concern about humans eating cattle that had grazed pastures with treated effluent applied?

SM noted that this land could either be use of biosolids or treated effluent. Examples included irrigation on lawn near the CHPP or application as part of the university tree plot trial undertaken near the Main dam.

BM enquired how the effluent was treated.

CF responded that the treated effluent came from the Muswellbrook sewage treatment plant.

JM noted that there was also some treatment carried out on site.

SM presented an example of ecosystem and land use sustainability which is included within the RBMP and examples of performance criteria and indicators.

MR enquired what an analogue site was.

SM responded that an analogue site was a suitably identified site that would be used as a comparison to compare rehabilitation performance.

MR suggested that the number of trees per square metre may be a better defined measure.

CF suggested that the measure should reflect the goal.

JM explained that analogue sites are used to measure success of rehabilitation in accordance with what is currently there now. . After many years of drought rehabilitation may not look like the originally selected site but a comparison can be made to the analogue site as it is at that time.

MR suggested that the CCC should look at the analogue sites.

JM explained that a specialist would choose the sites but the CCC would be able to inspect them.

MR suggested that there was a need to set up how the specialist defines analogue sites.

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JM noted that the Rehabilitation & Biodiversity Management Plan was still in draft and suggestions could be incorporated.

SM presented an example of post mined lands, noting that the Rehabilitation & Biodiversity Management Plan factors in and references the Federal Government recovery plan for the Boxgum woodland endangered ecological community.

CF asked if canopy spacing was defined in the recovery plan.

SM responded that species were defined but he wasn't sure of tree spacing or density.

MR agreed that some quantification of density was required.

JM noted that this suggestion would be taken on notice.

SM presented information on monitoring and reporting explaining that monitoring was a key component of the longer term objectives of rehabilitation:

- Compare monitoring results against rehabilitation objectives and targets;
- Identify possible trends and areas for improvement;
- Link to records of rehabilitation to determine causes and explain results;
- Assess effectiveness of environmental controls implemented;
- Where necessary, identify modifications required for the monitoring program, rehabilitation practices or areas requiring research;
- Compare flora species present against original seed mix and/or analogue sites;
- Assess vegetation health;
- Assess vegetation structure (upper, mid and lower storey); and
- Where applicable, assess the effectiveness of habitat creation for target fauna species.

CF noted that only habitat creation was referred to, not the presence of species.

JM stated that the effectiveness of habitat creation will be measured by species use, such as is currently done with nesting boxes. JM noted that Mt Arthur Coal will ensure that this is clear in the Rehabilitation & Biodiversity Management Plan.

CF suggested that invertebrates should be looked at as well.

SM noted that the tables in the Rehabilitation & Biodiversity Management Plan were set out more clearly and included details on habitat establishment and monitoring of use

BM asked if there was a table that indicated a timeframe for aspects of the plan.

SM replied there was not a defined timeframe for aspects within the plan.

BM enquired if the additional 4 years requested in the project modification, discussed at the last CCC meeting, was to allow time to complete rehabilitation?

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JM responded that, in relation to the timeline, there was none specified in the Rehabilitation & Biodiversity Management Plan but this is outlined in the Mine Operations Plan (MOP), which is submitted every 2 years.

JB stated that he thought that the CCC is supposed to be given a copy of the MOP.

MR noted that the MOP was a publicly available document.

JM agreed that the MOP could be accessed through government departments under freedom of information but there is some confidential data in it. JM stated that the MOP could be discussed at future CCC meetings.

JM, in response to BM's query about the modification, noted that the additional 4 years requested in the project modification is part of an ongoing growth project. Mt Arthur Coal will continue to operate after this time unless future approvals are not granted. Since the initial mine planning work there have been a number of external and internal factors that have affected the value of the investment required to grow Mt Arthur Coal. The four-year extension of mining will allow the full value of the investment of the project to be realised. The four year extension will allow for continued open cut mining within the current mining lease without the need to increase the ROM coal extraction limit above the currently approved open cut limit of 32 mtpa.

8. **OUTLINE OF NEXT STEPS AND STAKEHOLDER REVIEW**

SM presented information on the next steps for consultation in the preparation of the RBMP:

- Implementation where possible with steps already undertaken (ie additional soil sampling, native seed collection, quotes for rehabilitation monitoring programmes etc)
- CCC feedback opportunity 7 March
- Revised final document circulated for review 14 March
- Final meeting and summary presentation (optional) 21 March
- Ensuring communication of the final plan and requirements to relevant personnel

SM confirmed that all CCC members had received a letter sent recently about support that Mark Burns could provide to the CCC on the Rehabilitation & Biodiversity Management Plan. SM noted that Mark could be contacted directly or through Mt Arthur Coal.

SM advised that the final meeting proposed for 21 March was optional.

JB responded that the CCC's agreement should be documented.

JM noted that this could be discussed further in the next CCC meeting.

CF requested that a copy of the draft Rehabilitation & Biodiversity Management Plan be emailed and posted to CF and MR (Action Item 1).

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CF requested that each revised version of the Rehabilitation & Biodiversity Management Plan be clearly marked so the versions are not confused (Action Item 2).

Meeting Closed: 4:55 pm

ACTION ITEM NO.	ITEM	ACTION BY
1	Email and post CF and MR a copy of the draft Rehabilitation & Biodiversity Management Plan.	RS
2	Clearly mark each future version of the draft Rehabilitation & Biodiversity Management Plan.	SM

MT ARTHUR MINE COMPLEX
COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday 16 February, 2012

AGENDA

<u>Time</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Person</u>
4:00	1 Welcome and apologies	Chairperson
4:02	2 House keeping and safety	MAC
4:05	3 Structure and layout of Rehabilitation & Biodiversity Management Plan	MAC
4:10	4 Alignment with I&I NSW Guidelines & link to Rehabilitation Strategy	Chairperson
4:10	5 Action points since last meeting	MAC
4:15	6 Landuse goals & objectives	MAC
4:25	7 Domains, completion criteria and monitoring	MAC
4:40	8 Outline of next steps & stakeholder review	MAC
4:50	9 Meeting close	Chairperson