

Mt Arthur Coal
Community Consultative Committee Meeting
9th November 2022
Community Response Line: 1800 882 044



Membership and Attendance

Chairperson:

Dr. W.E.J Paradise AM (WP) Independent Chair MAC CCC

BHP Representatives:

Grant Coulton (GC)	General Manager
Katie Weaver (KW)	Corporate Affairs Specialist – Community Communications
Sarah Bailey (SB)	Manager Approvals, Land, Access and Heritage
Amanda Walker (AW)	Manager Corporate Affairs NSWEC (apology)
Jimmy Nixon (JN)	Environmental Superintendent
Katherine Skeen (SK)	Specialist Environment

Community Representatives:

Theresa Folpp (TF)	Muswellbrook Shire Council
Sharon Pope (SP)	Muswellbrook Shire Council (apology)
Lavinia Hutchison (LH)	Community member (apology)
John Hobden (JH)	Community member (apology)
Jennifer Lecky (JL)	Community Member
Di Gee (DG)	Community Member
Kerri Garvie (KG)	Independent Minute taker

- 1. Welcome and Apologies:** The meeting was held online at 9:15am via video conference with the chair WP welcoming everyone and apologizing for the technical issues causing the late start. WP welcomed GC and congratulated him on his appointment. WP also welcomed KS. WP acknowledged the traditional owners of the country.
Apologies: WP had received apologies for LH, JH and AW. TF had received apologies for SP.
- 2. Safety/ Sustainability:** This item will be covered with Item 7
- 3. Declaration of Pecuniary Interests: *Ongoing Declaration* –**
WP is paid for chairing the meeting as is KG for taking the minutes.
- 4. Minutes of the previous Meeting:** Previous minutes had been circulated, corrected and accepted by the Chair as a true recording of the meeting.

5. **Business arising:** WP mentioned 2 ongoing items for the minutes. Specifically, the request to have the Department of Planning talk to the committee about 1 - dust and 2 - lighting. These 2 items have been on the agenda for some time. While the intention has been for the Department to visit the committee Covid prevented this taking place. The intention is to keep this on agenda. A further item as discussed by WP and JL, relates to representation. JL has now been elected to Council but was originally appointed to this committee as a Community Member. JL will still maintain her role as a Community Member while SP/TF will be the official reps for Council.
6. **Report from Chair:** WP discussed the NSW Department of Planning's revision to the guidelines for Community Consultative Committees (CCC). WP has made comments on the 1st and 2nd draft. WP also participated in an online meeting with fellow Chairs to discuss the revisions. The Department had started to introduce CCCs as part of the consultation process prior to approval being granted to State significant projects, particularly renewable energy projects such as wind farms. The revised guidelines are indicating that CCCs would only be formed post approval of a project of State significance. Other revisions include: Change in Code of Conduct for community members; the development of a template for the terms of reference for committee. It will take a few months to review and finalize guidelines. Once this is done, there is a timeline of approximately 6 months to comply with new set of guidelines. JN requested a copy of the guidelines. WP will send information through a copy to all members.
7. **Operations Update and introduction by Grant Clouten:**
- a. Water Management: Challenge for site to manage due to volume of water fallen. Impacting operations over last couple of years has been rain, water storage and discharge. Water sits at bottom of pits until a storage location found. Ability to discharge off site has been a challenge due to short windows of time, that a discharge opportunity is coming up. Pre GC, a plan was developed to change the situation. A Team has put infrastructure in place to take up discharge opportunities quickly, using high volume, to remove water from site. Since mid-year 100 - 200 megalitres has been removed but rain was doubled that. This has put pressure on production, not just from water laying on ground but also by making areas inaccessible. Due to existing infrastructure, able to remove one ½ gicalitres water offsite, thus relieving pressure on water storage areas. If this continues, a steady rate of production can be maintained. From an impact perspective, despite rain, quick responses and communications with other mines, have achieved a great outcome. As there is still masses of water on site, if rain persists, we will need to stay on top of the situation.
 - b. Operations: It has been difficult due to rain although there is less dust. We are behind on overburden production, which in turn means being behind on coal production. Losses are going to be difficult to recover from, but plans are being put in place. On site, morale has been affected, people want to do a good job and need to be engaged. There has been an impact from a labour and skills shortage across the board. We need to recruit and engage a diversity of new staff to the industry, particularly locals. There are no foreseeable changes in the ongoing search for labour. Cost pressures include diesel and explosives.
 - c. Conclusion: Although prices are favourable at this time, due to all these factors, sales and size of operations has been impacted.
 - d. Discussion: WP asked if the salinity trading scheme was being used to manage water? JN indicated that the Hunter River Salinity Trading Scheme (HRSTS) has live data going to EPA from the discharge point. MAC takes daily water quality samples to check water is appropriate, under the scheme, to be released into river. There has been a change as Mt Arthur has been a net water user previously. Mt Arthur has 20 credits, but credits are traded and shared, within the scheme, between the mines in the upper sector helping production to keep going in the industry. The upcoming Information session re HRSTS was discussed. This is happening next week in Singleton, and results could be discussed at the next meeting. GC - a lot of work has been done in mine closure, post mining land

use opportunity space. SB is well qualified to lead team on this ever-changing journey for the next couple of years. GC leaves meeting.

8. Land management: Covered with 9 Environment

9. Environment: Discussion: WP - Have there been days where dust levels have been high? JN - Yes, Sheppard Ave location has had a couple of days with sharp peak. Even with all the rain, we have had some high winds and storm fronts come through resulting in short, sharp cool weather which impacts dust levels, accounting for readings up around our limit and the sites contribution is quite high as well. Broadly, dust levels have been fairly well controlled because of wet weather. Water management has been a main focus for JN team, still moving through our wet week management program. With the change in season a lot of weed species start growing on site, we are staying focussed on this. Have been working with Council on a few particular things they have wanted us to do along the edge of our operation. We have started to do pig trapping etc. Change in season is an opportunity to do some good work. Discussion: WP - Do you have contractors do the spraying? JN - Yes, we have 2 or 3 people dedicated to weed and pest management throughout the year, being such a large site, it is a constant workload. We also have 14 ha of rehab completed so a trial is being run on VD4, which is a dump site closest to the one that is most visible to Muswellbrook. We are trialling some different practices there, seeding onto direct spoil as well as hay mulch on the compost area. Using rehab areas to see if practices can be improved, will report on this in coming quarters. Discussion: JL would like to look at where the big hole, between Drayton and Mt Arthur, has been filled in. JN - Rehab has been finished there, tour for group or JL could be organized.

10. Community Complaints: KW - Last quarter there were 11 complaints, not ideal. Lighting is most predominant complaint, which is rectified on the night. Issue is walked through with the resident, and all were resolved this way. Lodgement is through Community Response Line which triggers response from MAC. There was a fault from the phone line carrier not notifying the production number. Now rectified and tested regularly. Area being mined adjacent to complainants' property. This particular resident is in the centre of activities, and we are mindful of this. Discussion: WP - does the resident call, and angle of lights are changed? KW - they call 1800 number, the community response line, which we put in newspaper and advertise everywhere. JN, myself and AW receive email and text messages, as well as our 24 hr OCE mobile number gets a text message, and the complainant is called back. They are asked, how they can be helped, and is situation rectified? If not, what can be done? Resolution takes about 1 to 1 ½ hours, depending on where people are in the pit but is actioned straight away. WP - is the service provided by Optus? KW - No, Vodaphone

11. Update: MAC MOD 2030 Approval SB is presently working on the plan to obtain relevant approvals beyond the existing approval which currently expires in June 2026. Whilst there are high level conversations happening and strategies being developed, there is a lot of work needed to be done before this can start. This could be awhile, as focus, now, is on modifications. Project status update: Have undertaken comprehensive stakeholder engagement, including the social impact assessment. Have now engaged with over 130 external stakeholders, including NGO's, equine industry, viticulture, council, local MPs, business owners and Indigenous partners. On 21st November we have now locked in the presentation to the SSD committee at council. On 18th October, the Modification Scoping letter was lodged via the planning portal which is the formal first step for the Project. As of 2nd November, Project is now in 'Modification Report preparation phase'. The NSW Department of Planning have accepted the Scoping letter and we are now commencing with the 20 plus specialist sub consultant groups who have now been engaged for those studies. Ecological surveys have been completed and EPBC strategy is being prepared. We are working through Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment scope and there will be an Expression of Interest placed in newspaper, which is a part of the formal process to call for any new registered Aboriginal parties that would like to be consulted as part of the project. There is a Mining Development Panel meeting, on site, scheduled for 15 November 2022. This is with

Mining Exploration, Geo Science Resource Regulator and titled team of Department. Meeting is looking at resource utilization.

- 12. Update: Pathway to 2030** Pathway to closure activities have commenced, more in the strategy phase. Expecting in the next 10 to 12 weeks to have something in more detail for a plan moving forward. A lot of time has been spent briefing over 500 of the workforce, giving them the facility to ask questions in relation to the 4-year approval process and for the consent we are seeking due to the impacts on the workforce and place. Would like to provide certainty that we are doing whatever possible to secure 4-year extension. Discussion: WP - What are key questions and concerns of the workforce? SB - Consistent feedback is around certainties of 4-year mark. Response is, whilst there are no guarantees through 3rd party-controlled process, the best people in the industry have spent a lot of time working through, ensuring design fits comfortably within the scope of what a modification is. Substantial improvements have been identified in the final landform plan, revised void configuration, the ability to reduce the main sub plots by about 40 metres and the net reduction of the approved disturbance by 377 ha. Significant benefits to project. Important to note that no wins if closure happens 2026 as not enough time for all parties to transition. Feedback has been very positive from crew. Other questions are pertaining to job opportunities of continuing with rehabilitation. When we stop extracting coal on 30th June 2030, there will still be 10 to 15 years of rehabilitation beyond that point. Progressive rehabilitation will be occurring as we are moving towards that date, but reality is, some areas will not be available until coal extraction is complete. Rehab phase after 2030 will require a workforce and different machinery, as yet this is not being discussed with workforce. Other question being asked is, what is the fallback position if extra 4 years is not secured. Response is, that if there are issues with project we will adapt or adjust modifications, by working closely with all parties, to address issues involved. Progressive rehab plan: Dark green - areas already rehabilitated. Light green - 826 ha of rehab will be able to be accessed/completed between now and 2030. Other large areas of land will need to be completed post 2030. This is the Final Landform plan we will be seeking approval for; this is 1st draft version. Visible is the Mt Arthur Summit in middle of operation, and some habitat corridors linking up the north, west, east and south and a large area at south of operation where we have identified the ability not to disturb at all, which is of significant benefit to this project. Schedule - we are looking at a safety report middle of next year and anticipating approval around end of 2024, early 2025. We have a Project Milestone and consultation Summary, long way to go, but on track for delivering project. Discussion: TF - Dept of Planning are releasing their Regional Plan, due out next week, hopefully include a place strategy which will fix some zoning issues the coal mines are having for final land use, worth noting. SB - that is one of the key legislative constraints with repurposing and future land use. TF - How did meeting go with the issue re Resources Regulator expectations and final land use? Was there any movement on that during that meeting? SB - Transitions meeting was great, there were multiple government departments in attendance, they were aligned on issues and constraints that needed to be unlocked from a legislative perspective to ensure these areas are being set up for future success. We do not control that; we were hoping for transitional authority or retrospective legislation that will apply to these areas to unlock economic benefits in the future. SB will continue with updates keeping CCC informed of any major milestones happening with project. SB leaves meeting.
- 13. Reports from Community Members:** Nothing to report from JL or DG. WP - JH has been speaking to various community members to be able to give feedback to Daniel Holmes re Social Impact Assessment. JH can report on this at next meeting. WP will follow up.
- 14. Report from Muswellbrook Council:** Dept of Planning have proposed “renewable energy zones”. There is one out west and another further north. Council has been objecting to any of the proposed development out in that area due to the transporting of about 2500 wind turbine blades to go through the shire, primarily down Golden Hwy, turn right onto Denman Rd. Some have proposed to use Betterton Rd. There are 2500 movements, blades are up to 90 metres, some larger. There is no strategic plan for their movements. The roads have not been designed for those types of movements. There is a meeting with Energy Co in the next

couple of weeks to discuss this issue further but until there is a more strategic approach, Council will continue to object to those projects. Proposed to start bringing big trucks through in next 12 months to 2 years. Muswellbrook bypass starting construction late next year with completion in 2027. Discussion: TF – Council plans to object to any scoping plans submitted by renewable energy companies, which sends them straight to the Independent Planning Commission (IPC). The Council has noted in our submission that some of the plans they have to widen corners, are mine owned and the mines have agreements with land holders. The situation presently means that each mine will need to have an agreement with each wind farm which would require multiple agreements. Turbines would need to be moved early in the morning when shift workers are heading to work. If there are up to 2000 movements, they will possibly need to move in train formation. There will need to be road and intersection closures for up to 15 minutes per movement, if there are 3 movements, this means 45 minute closures. A lot of issues have not been considered, there is a meeting with their engineers this week to try and sort these out. JN - Where are the turbine zones? Are they in the Muswellbrook Shire? TF - No, they are going to the Central West area. We are in the Hunter Renewable Energy Zone, which has a couple of proposals at this stage. They will need to travel on back roads. WP - There are the New England, Central West and Hunter REZ which have all been formalized under the Dept of Planning so there are some major proposals which will provide challenges for the future.

15. **General Business:** Nothing raised.

16. **Next Meeting:** Wednesday 8th February 2023. Start 9 am. Other 3 dates will be included with the minutes. Proposed - Wednesday 17th May 2023; Wednesday 9th August 2023; Wednesday 8th November 2023.

17. **Meeting Close:** 10.24 am

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING:

ACTION 1: Chair to circulate draft of the new Community Consultative Committee guidelines;

ACTIONS REMAINING OPEN FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

Action 1 (Feb 2019): Chair to contact the DP&E (DPIE) to ascertain if a department representative could attend a future CCC meeting to speak about the cumulative impacts of dust. The DP&E were contacted	Chair to discuss with NSW Department of Planning	Ongoing
Action 2 (Nov 2019): Chair to arrange a department representative to discuss the lighting issue and associated community impacts particularly through the provision of defining offensive lighting.	Chair to discuss with NSW Department of Planning	Ongoing
Action 3 (May 2022): WP to confirm with JL who will be representing the Council and to clarify if she is a community member or a councillor on the committee.	Chair & JL	Completed: JL will remain as Community member