



**Mt Arthur Coal (MAC)**  
**Community Consultative Committee (CCC) Meeting**  
**Wednesday 12 February 2025**

**Attendance**

**Chairperson**

Dr. W.E.J Paradise (WP)

Independent Chair

**Community Representatives**

Jennifer Lecky (JL)

Community Representative

**Stakeholder Representatives**

De-Anne Douglas (DD)

CEO Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC)

**Muswellbrook Shire Council (MSC)**

Tracy Ward (TW)

Muswellbrook Shire Council (MSC)

**Company Representatives**

Darryl Messenger (DM)

General Manager

Liam Lawford (LL)

Specialist Indigenous Engagement

Jelinda Millgate (JM)

Principal Community

Jimmy Nixon (JN)

Superintendent Environment

**Apologies**

Claire Quigley

Community Representative

Di Gee

Community Representative

Theresa Folpp / Sharon Pope

Muswellbrook Shire Council

Sarah Bailey

Manager Land Access, Approvals & Heritage

**Minutes**

Sarah Purser (SP)

**1. Acknowledgement of Country;** led by LL.

**2. Welcome & Apologies**

WP opened the meeting at 8.58 a.m. welcoming all in attendance. Darryl Messenger was introduced as General Manager, Mt Arthur Coal, and Liam Lawford as Specialist Indigenous Engagement NSW. Muswellbrook Shire Council (MSC) have elected Cr Jeff Drayton as Council's representative and Cr Louise Dunn as alternate representative to the Mt Arthur Community Consultative Committee.

**3. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest**

*Standing;* WP is remunerated for Chairing the meeting, as is SP for taking the minutes.

**4. Minutes of the previous Meeting held 20 November 2024**

WP confirmed the minutes had been circulated and have been approved as a true and accurate record, the minutes are available on the company website.

**5. Report from the Chair - Wej Paradise**

WP noted that recruitment and ongoing community membership is an issue that a number of CCC's are facing across the State. WP explained that in particular younger members are finding it difficult to commit to the CCC's due to work pressures, as had been the case for LH who resigned at the previous meeting. WP advised that there can be up to 7 (in total) community and stakeholder group representatives.

**ACTION 1: WP and JM to liaise regarding commencing a process for recruiting more Community and Stakeholder group members for the MAC CCC.**

## 6. Operational Update - Darryl Messenger

DM provided an overview of his career experience, at the time of this Meeting DM had been in the role of General Manager for six months and he thanked all for the warm welcome. DM ran through subject matters that he can talk to, noting there are exciting events regarding the modification that MAC have applied for and the high level communication being had with MAC's workforce. DM said if there were any specific topics the CCC would like him to cover at these meetings to please let him know.

WP expressed an interest in how the business was placed from a global perspective and in terms of production. DM provided an overview on the recent trend in coal prices and explained that historically the thermal market peaks tend to be driven by seasonal demands. DM noted that MAC also provide coal to the local power stations.

DM advised that there had been wet weather impacts in January however MAC were on target for coal production and working to increase dirt movement. WP asked how MAC increase their output, DM responded this requires a strong mine plan and that MAC are able to accelerate production and catch up on good weather days.

**Safety Overview;** DM noted the importance of safety and advised the company has launched a new campaign called MAC SAFE. MAC are reinvigorating all the safety systems they already have in place and do a lot of work on behavioural safety.

**Workforce;** WP asked how staffing is tracking in terms of the recruitment of people. DM noted that the subject of recruitment has some overlap with the Pathway to 2030. DM advised that should the MAC MOD 2030 be approved that will be a pivotal moment for the company in terms of their engagement strategy with their teams. This will trigger an understanding of workforce decisions around staying on board to 2030 and those looking to move into retirement, so that MAC can support them through their individual chosen pathways.

DM explained that MAC would need to retain a committed team to 2030 and cannot fall short as the company will have a finite end to meet targets such as the movement of dirt to hit the final landforms and rehabilitation.

DM asked if there were any other questions he could help members with and DD responded that the employment of local people is important to her i.e. to employ as many local people as possible. DM confirmed that the Programmed people are local and the intention is to maintain that workforce all the way through to 2030.

In relation to the Pathway to 2030 DM acknowledged that changes to livelihoods can have differing emotional responses. Therefore during the workforce "Together Tomorrow" conversations, where in the order of 1,100 people were interviewed, all sorts of information was collected in terms of what their staff preferences would be and the different kinds of support they were seeking.

DM noted that from the "Together Tomorrow" interviews there were a number of focus areas determined to help the workforce stay engaged.

**Financial Advice;** MAC engaged Mine Super to provide financial advice via group and one on one sessions.

**Careers Expo;** This was held in Muswellbrook and attended by Government and other industries to review what MAC's workforce would look like in 2030 and potential career opportunities.

**Study Assistance Program;** DM noted that study does not have to be mining related and MAC had encouraged their people to think broadly in relation to career options. MAC will reimburse all team members for the study they do out to 2030 as long as this is completed through a Registered Training Organisation. Whilst many are doing mining related study, DM noted there are a number of people doing a variety of university studies such as MBA's. DM provided an example of one staff member who had wanted to study Speech Pathology with the goal to provide that service in the Upper Hunter.

Should the MOD be approved DM noted there will be discussions held around shorter term pathways i.e. for those wishing to transition into retirement and also retention strategies MAC need to offer to their maintain staff. DM acknowledged that some people feel 2030 is a long way away and they will consider their pathways later. Therefore high on MAC's priorities is robust communication to encourage staff to think, engage and start their planning now. MAC also have Worker Focus Groups in place and this engagement with operators and maintainers will assist MAC to design packages and programs that are the most suitable to them.

DD queried the percentage of Aboriginal personnel at MAC and this was confirmed to be 8.03%, this detail is tracked monthly. DD advised that it is a priority for the LALC to understand this percentage so they can support transition processes for their people. LL advised that BHP have on boarded Casey Mawson as an Indigenous Support Liaison (ISL) and her role is to embed herself within the workforce to learn how MAC can be operating better and transition towards a stable and equitable working environment for Indigenous employees. DM asked if the CCC would like Casey attend a future meeting for a meet and greet and DD confirmed she would very much like to meet her.

DM queried if there were any other subject matters the CCC would like to focus on, WP suggested that a reminder be sent to members a few weeks prior to Meetings to call for items of interest.

## **7. Pathway to 2030 Closure Legacy Expectations Assessment (CLEA) Update - Jelinda Millgate & Liam Lawford**

JM confirmed that MAC had held a meeting to release the CLEA report and noted that JL and TW had not been attendance, therefore JM had copies of this report in hand and will share detail at today's meeting. The CLEA report was prepared by MAC's independent consultant ICENI and is a culmination of consultation work that had been conducted in 2023 and 2024. This included interviews of around 40 people, surveys with approximately 800 people, and workshops with business owners and community representatives, to isolate the key things that community expects from BHP as they lead to closure.

JM acknowledged there had been mixed emotions about closure; economic uncertainty, concerns about environment or visual amenity, Cultural Heritage preservation, desire for greater involvement, and the importance of community and social liveability challenges. JM noted the issues from community had been fairly well known, therefore it was good to have these quantified and validated in ICENI's report so BHP know the initiatives they are planning to support the community up to closure align with what the community would like to see.

In terms of Visual Amenity and communication about the rehabilitation work that is already happening on site, MAC have decided to do a Tree Planting Day on 4 April 2025. MAC are inviting community to have a tour of the mine, share lunch together, plant a few trees, learn about the rehabilitation that has been completed on site, also Cultural Heritage and how MAC are preserving this at Mt Arthur.

MAC would like as many community members and stakeholder groups to come to the Tree Planting Day as possible, JN provided detail of those that MAC have already reached out to and who has expressed an interest to come along. JN said it would be good to build a community of people that are passionate and interested in rehabilitation and environmental outcomes. JN asked the CCC to please share detail of the Tree Planting Day with any of their contacts that they feel would like to be involved and also may have an interest in attending future engagements around rehabilitation decisions.

DD confirmed that for the LALC, rehabilitation of the mines is forefront in terms of how many Aboriginal voices have a say. JN confirmed that LL is involved in planning the Tree Planting Day and the MAC team have those relevant stakeholders that they will reach out to. DD spoke about a person that had an incredible knowledge around plants and JN responded that may be a good example of the type of people MAC want to get in touch with. JN noted that MAC are happy to catch up in person off site and JN and DD agreed to talk about potential contacts that the LALC may be able to share.

**ACTION 2: JM to circulate the flier on the Tree Planting Day for CCC members to share with their networks that may be interested in attending.**

JM noted an outcome of the CLEA was realising the importance of post mining land use and Cultural Heritage preservation. JM introduced LL to talk about the Indigenous Land Use Project at today's meeting.

December 2024 saw the beginning of a series of community engagements designed to seek input and feedback from the Wonnarua/Wanaruah community around the establishment of an Indigenous specific land related project.

LL noted that MAC are hearing from the Indigenous community that access to land for cultural purposes is very high on their list of aspirations. Therefore MAC embarked upon this journey of creating a project that would allow community to do that.

LL advised that MAC have identified three parcels of buffer land that are strong candidates and indicated their locations via mapping. LL provided a detailed overview on each land parcel, covering; size in hectares, potential for infra-structure and/or existing infra-structure, access to power and water, and a descriptive vista that each one has to offer.

The engagements have been designed to seek feedback from community on what they would like to see come from these properties. MAC wanted there not to only be a parcel of land where community can undertake Cultural practices, but also want to look at the economic, social and environmental benefits that could be achieved from this project.

MAC have received feedback regarding the establishment of a Landcare team and LL acknowledged the work Lands Council is undertaking with the same goals. DD confirmed that the LALC do have a Landcare Team and have a Community Land Business Plan that they work towards. LL noted that seeing the similarities that were existing between the Lands Council plan and what MAC are hearing from community was refreshing as that confirms there is a strong desire for these things to happen. LL believed there were parallels that could be drawn on to create a stronger drive towards what everyone is trying to achieve. DD confirmed that she as LALC's representative and LL will meet out of session to discuss land care in more detail.

LL noted that land management had been raised as an important topic as community have the desire to be able to work on country. In addition there have been discussion around things like a Bush Nursery and a permanent Keeping Place for artefacts to be stored when they cannot be repatriated onto land.

LL noted that a multi-purpose facility on land that is accessible to all of community could provide a myriad of opportunities covering a Tourism aspect to potentially tap into Cultural Immersion and Awareness, host events like the Naidoc celebrations and the annual Community Corroboree that have been highly successful and well attended, and also offer after School Training Programs.

The next stage of engagements will be to get a broad community perspective and ensure there is a long strategic direction for this project, LL anticipated this will be scoped around June 2025. LL confirmed that if anyone would like to meet with him, as part of a group or as an individual, LL is more than happy to do this at a time and place that is convenient to them.

WP noted that when MAC was approved there would have been regulations around final land use and queried the flexibility within that framework that would allow MAC to adapt to new circumstances in terms of what is being proposed. JN responded that there are Woodland Corridors and Biodiversity Offsets that MAC must establish and maintain and there are final land use commitments for site.

JN confirmed the land that LL has outlined is outside of MAC's approval boundary, therefore there is potentially more flexibility around having this repurposed. MAC are committed to working with Government to get the best possible outcome and DD felt that if land was being used for the correct purpose there may be potential for support in relation to rezoning. DD sees what BHP is trying to do for the whole community, noting this is about education, support and about providing an opportunity for voices to be heard.

## **8. Reports from Community / Stakeholder Group Representatives**

JL queried an area on the southern side of the mine where MAC were going to go underground and asked if MAC has finished up there or plan to use that. JN confirmed the portal has been dumped out, there is rock on top of this and DM confirmed that MAC are not going underground.

DD advised the construction certificate has been received for the Keeping Place to be built at the rear of the LALC office in Muswellbrook. This will allow for artefacts to be placed on display and increase capacity to run programs with larger numbers. The Land Carer Program has commenced and DD provided an overview of funding so people understand the LALC a bit better and that their goal is to increase their own income.

Part of the Land Carer Program is to have local Aboriginal people trained up in difference aspects i.e. everything from fencing to weed control so some of the Land Carers can go out to do some work that will assist to provide income but also to give them the knowledge they need to help rebuild land. The LALC will be renaming the Common and DD discussed issues regarding damage to this land.

DD thanked BHP for their donation and support with regard to 2NM's Food & Toy Appeal that supported in the order of 462 families at Christmas time. DD noted there had been around 93 people that attended the Christmas Day Lunch run by Blackroo and expressed thanks to all of the Muswellbrook Shire community that came together make that possible.

## **9. Report from Muswellbrook Shire Council (MSC)**

TW advised that MSC have been kept busy reviewing a large range of Renewable Energy Projects and the associated movement of large pieces of equipment through the local area. DD noted another priority for MSC is to progress projects such as the Olympic Park and the Entertainment Centre, Council Staff are doing an amazing job of putting everything together for these and there will be engagement with user groups to determine what can be achieved within the set budgets of Grant Funding.

In relation to Grants, JM confirmed MAC have their Benefiting My Community Program which aims to support community organisations to fund activities which encourage community participation and build community capacity in the Upper Hunter, Muswellbrook and Singleton Local Government Areas. These are grants of up to \$10,000.00 for specific purposes such as community events, equipment purchase or infrastructure enhancement. BHP encourage applications from community organisations and groups that can demonstrate intended benefit for the community that align with BHP's purpose, value and social investment key focus areas.

JM noted that the Grass Roots Sponsorship Grants are new and were an outcome from MAC's Employee Forum where staff said they would like some smaller grants for Sporting and Community Clubs. JM explained these sponsorship grants are for \$2,000.00 and anyone can apply from an area that the BHP employee resides. The workforce then decide on the successful candidates by picking their top three which determines the top ten to receive funding. JM noted this workforce engagement had led to this community investment initiative and due to this MAC understand applications for funding will be for groups that their employees are involved with and care about. MAC encourage their workforce to talk to clubs and community groups that they are involved with, as they can endorse the applications as well.

**The two annual funding rounds are:-**

1 February to 1 March 2025

1 August to 1 September 2025

Further information is available by emailing; [nswec.community@bhp.com](mailto:nswec.community@bhp.com)

## **10.Land Management and Environment by Jimmy Nixon**

### **Rehabilitation and Land Management**

The rehabilitation target for FY25 is 135 hectares. During the reporting period MAC continued works in the Saddlers North area at the southern end of the mine and commenced works in the western end of the Out of Pit Dump area. A total of 50.3 hectares has been seeded year to date. Weed treatment continues to focus on maintenance of FY24 rehabilitation areas.

### **Environmental Monitoring Results (1 October to 31 December 2024)**

JN provided an overview of MAC's Environmental Monitoring in relation to Air Quality, Water, Blast and Operational Noise, noting these details are provided to the CCC in the Meeting Pre-Read.

### **Environmental Reporting**

MAC has completed, and therefore complied with, all annual reporting requirements under licence conditions. These reports are available to view on the BHP website using the following link:

<https://www.bhp.com/environment/regulatory-information#>

## **11.General Business**

MAC confirmed that they will put a notice in their next Newsletter regarding the CCC looking for new members. MAC acknowledged that DG had suggested advertising in School and Community Hall Newsletters.

## **12.Next Meetings**

JM advised that MAC had booked the University of Newcastle Muswellbrook Campus in an effort to provide more convenient meeting access for members. It was agreed to continue meeting at the University unless there be a need to tie in a Site Tour.

### **Meeting Schedule:-**

- ✓ 14 May 2025
- ✓ 13 August 2025
- ✓ 19 November 2025

## **14.Meeting Close**

WP closed the Meeting at 10.29 a.m. thanking members for their attendance.

### **Actions Arising**

ACTION 1: WP and JM to liaise regarding commencing a process for recruiting more Community and Stakeholder group members for the MAC CCC.

ACTION 2: JM to circulate the flier on the Tree Planting Day for CCC members to share with their networks that may be interested in attending.

### **Action Carried Forward**

MAC's official statement in relation to the earthquake activity to be circulated to the CCC.