

**Mt Arthur Coal (MAC)****Community Consultative Committee (CCC) Meeting****Wednesday 14 May 2025****Attendance****Chairperson**

Dr. W.E.J Paradise (WP)

Independent Chair

**Community Representatives**

Di Gee (DG)

Community Representative

Claire Quigley (CQ)

Community Representative

**Stakeholder Representatives**

De-Anne Douglas (DD)

CEO Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC)

**Muswellbrook Shire Council (MSC)**

Cr Jeff Drayton (JD)

Muswellbrook Shire Council (MSC)

Tracy Ward (TW)

Muswellbrook Shire Council (MSC)

**Company Representatives**

Darryl Messenger (DM)

General Manager

Amanda Walker (AW)

Manager Corporate Affairs

Chloe McLennan (CM)

Principal Environment

**Apologies**

Jennifer Lecky

Community Representative

Jelinda Millgate

Principal Community

Jimmy Nixon

Superintendent Environment

Sarah Bailey

Manager Land Access, Approvals &amp; Heritage

**Minutes**

Sarah Purser (SP)

**1. Acknowledgement of Country;** led by AW.**2. Welcome & Apologies**

WP opened the meeting at 9.05 welcoming members and thanking all for their attendance.

Apologies advised and recorded.

**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 12 February 2025**

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.

**Matters Arising****WP and JM to liaise regarding recruiting new Community Representatives for the MAC CCC.**

✓ In progress.

**JM to circulate the flier on the Tree Planting Day for CCC members to share with their networks.**

✓ Actioned by JM.

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

✓ Actioned by JM.

**MAC to advise the CCC when the Public Exhibition period is known for the EPBC Referral documentation.**

✓ In progress - no updates from DEECW at the time of this meeting.

## 5. Report from the Chair

WP confirmed that BHP's news about Mt Arthur Coal's extension to 2030 being approved, BHP's commitment to a \$30 million community fund and BHP's partnership with ACCIONA Energia to explore the potential development of a pumped hydro energy storage project at Mt Arthur Coal had been shared with the CCC on 16 April, 2025. Details can be found at [Mt Arthur Coal Pathway | BHP](#)

## 6. Company Update

### 2030 Approval Received

DM noted the approval for MAC to continue mining through to 30 June 2030 had been a significant milestone and has given the business consistency and direction. DM advised that there is an allowance for MAC to process coal through to 30 December 2030 to ensure last coal is removed from site. From an overall workforce perspective the 2030 approval had been very well received.

JD queried if there would be any reduction in production in the lead up to 2030 and DM responded there will be a taper off of overburden and total waste movement, however coal will remain fairly consistent through to 2030.

### BHP partners with ACCIONA Energia for Pumped Hydro Study

BHP's conceptual studies show that a pumped hydro energy storage project at MAC has the potential to support around 1,000 jobs within the Upper Hunter in the construction phase, contribute to ongoing economic activity in Muswellbrook and provide power for up to 500,000 homes across NSW every day.

In response to a query on the time frame for this project AW advised that MAC's studies will be reviewed by ACCIONA and anticipated that would be conducted over a 12 month period. WP asked how this project would align with the Department of Planning, Housing & Infrastructure (DPHI) requirements for MAC, DM responded that MAC are providing support to ACCIONA as it is proposed to be located on their rehabilitated land. DM clarified that ACCIONA would own and run the project and there would need to be an application by ACCIONA as the proponent involving a separate consent and assessment process.

### Workforce

DM recapped on the three major focus areas for MAC's employees that had come from the "Together Tomorrow" interviews being; Financial Advice, Career Planning and an Education Support Program for Nationally Recognised Qualifications.

JD queried if there had been any targeting training towards jobs that would most likely be available in the area post 2030. DM responded that in the first instance MAC are targeting what their employees would like to do, hence career planning will assist them to pursue their individual wants and needs. In terms of lining up what opportunities there are in the Valley, MAC hosted a number of Career Expos in Singleton and Muswellbrook where they brought in a number of partner organisations and Government agencies to share insights into where future careers might be to assist people to identify these personal pathways. DM confirmed there have also been organisations that have reached out to MAC showing an interest in the workforce transition, noting there are also other mines that will continue to operate well beyond 2030.

The next step will be for MAC to conduct individual pathway conversations with every employee on site, anticipated to commence in July. In relation to JD's interest in MAC's retention strategy DM noted that these individual conversations will provide an opportunity for employees to share what they intend to do i.e. retirement, redundancy, re-skilling in mining or another field, alongside MAC being transparent regarding what staff they need to keep the business running.

CQ acknowledged MAC's current focus and engagement on their employees. In terms of the supply chain into BHP, particularly smaller business in the area, CQ noted there will be a lot of questions coming from them around how the 2030 closure will impact their business and how do they re-skill their people. CQ queried if MAC are having conversations with their support businesses and DM confirmed that AW has led a lot of that work since 2022 via forums with contractors to keep them up to date with MAC's position. Given the approval to 2030 MAC will conduct integrated forums with all of their vendors on a regular basis to talk about what closure will look like for them and what they might need to do to transition from the work that they provide now, to the work they might provide post 2030 including what some of those opportunities may look like.

JD added that business also approach MSC in relation to retraining and diversifying and MSC have been working with them based on what they have now through to five years time. Both BHP and MSC have done a lot of work in that space and JD confirmed a large focus for MSC has been on supporting businesses.

### **Operational Update**

DM confirmed that there were no substantial changes in the operation anticipated for the next two years. MAC have a base plan that was submitted as part of the Modification that covers how much dirt and coal they will mine. Should the pumped hydro study look positive for the ACCIONA project this would need to be factored into MAC's closure plans however this would not change final landforms.

WP queried the DPHI's flexibility in terms of being able to meet these other land use options and variations in terms of departmental rules and regulations. MAC confirmed that the DPHI have to base any modification decisions on the legislation and MAC have an obligation and are committed to delivering the required landform which is grass and trees. MAC acknowledge the strong voice from community for the desire to see more use of the land and if the community would like pumped hydro and the Government was to approve this, then MAC would provide support by creating the required landform.

There is a lot of work going on with Government Departments to build a bit of momentum on post mining land use. MAC noted there had been interest around the workshop and infrastructure on site and possibilities for how they may be reused e.g. for a transport hub or manufacturing and construction industries.

DM noted the release of the report from the Parliamentary Inquiry into beneficial and productive post-mining land use. AW added that BHP had participated in that Parliamentary enquiry as the forum provided an occasion to highlight the types of opportunities that can be unlocked with businesses coming together to work on these planning pieces.

In relation to what the final approved land form looks like and what MAC are committed to do, there is a suite of interactive tools that can be viewed at:-

[Mt Arthur Mine Panoramas & Drive-through Visualisations](#)

**Safety Overview;** MAC had been tracking well from a safety perspective over the previous quarter, the focus had been on ensuring people are getting their risk assessments right.

**Production;** DM advised there was confidence that MAC would bring in their full year plan and said that was a testament to the team on site. Performance has been very good and the business was in a steady state.

## **7. Pathway to 2030 Update**

### **Bright spot - Community Tree Planting Day**

From the Closure Legacy Expectations Assessment (CLEA) it had been made clear that community members and stakeholders wanted to understand what the site is going to look like at end of mine life and to be part of rehabilitating and rebuilding that future.

MAC held a community tree planting day on 4 April 2025 with almost 200 people in attendance, including local schools. Over 1000 trees were planted with a further 9000 to be planted by contractors. AW noted the tree planting had been on an area visible from Denman road, so that provided quite a powerful legacy for those that had been involved to be able to say they contributed to planting those trees and were part of that rehabilitation.

MAC also had some archaeologists in attendance with artefacts and there had been great engagement and interest from the schools around history and culture. DD was thankful that MAC had reached out to the LALC who had sent one of their site workers and had enabled beautiful displays of the different artefacts LALC were able to supply.

Given the positive feedback from the tree planting day, MAC would like to commit to this as an annual event. DD advised the LALC would like to be part of that again and reiterated they had been grateful that BHP had reached out to them.

### **BHP commits to a \$30 million Upper Hunter Community Fund**

AW advised this fund is aimed to support the Upper Hunter as BHP prepares for the responsible closure of the Mt Arthur Coal mine in 2030. AW noted that two of Icen's strategic recommendations and opportunities for BHP to leave a positive legacy included 1) the establishment of a community future fund to drive economic and social wellbeing outcomes and 2) to form a diverse and inclusive mine closure community group to empower the community in decision making and future planning.

AW provided an overview of the potential for an independent, not for profit, separate entity to manage and govern the Fund and bring in the community voice.

AW outlined the draft structure for the framework that would comprise of a Board of Directors, a full time CEO/convenor position and a Community Reference Group (CRG). The CRG would have a dual role in providing recommendations on spending of funds to the Board, but also to provide advice to BHP in relation to some of their closure considerations. BHP have a finite life operating to 2030, so they would like to set up the Fund governance to make decisions in a way that MAC can contribute at the start, but over time the Fund can become self sustaining.

The fund would be delivered in partnership with the community through a shared decision making model and will prioritise initiatives which; support job creation, entrepreneurship and industry diversification; support education and training opportunities; enhance social, cultural and recreational wellbeing of local residents; improve physical and mental health outcomes for residents of the Upper Hunter; support the protection of Aboriginal Heritage, Historic Heritage and Cultural Landscapes; and support indigenous entrepreneurship and economic empowerment

AW acknowledged CQ's feedback regarding support for small business in MAC's supply chain and felt that there would be opportunity within the Fund given one of the drivers is around supporting industry diversification.

AW confirmed that MAC would like the CCC to have input and share their thoughts regarding the proposed Fund governance model. It was agreed for MAC to circulate some targeted question to guide the CCC on the type of feedback they are seeking. JD confirmed that BHP have had a number of discussions with various staff at MSC regarding the Fund and he could also provide some feedback from those meetings.

### **Joint Tailings Management Project**

BHP and Malabar have collectively identified an opportunity for an improved tailings outcome for MAC which would involve the transfer of tailings from MAC over to an existing void at the Maxwell mine. This would involve building a pipeline on the surface to the Maxwell east void where tailings would be deposited, then there would be a return water pipeline.

There are a number of environmental benefits that would come from this project; one would avoid MAC lifting their existing tailings storage facility and the transfer to Maxwell's void would be filling up one of their existing voids. It was agreed by the CCC that in terms of final landform for both parties, this would be a "win win" situation, and acknowledged to be a very innovative way for tailings storage to be collaborated on.

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

DD was pleased to share the exciting news that the concrete slab had been poured for the Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) Keeping Place Shed. DD was proud that there had been quite a few different groups including BHP that had come along for that milestone. The next step is the actual shed build and internal set up. DD will be working with a number of local mines with regard to relocating artefacts they may have stored away on site to the Keeping Place. This will allow people to visit the Keeping Place and learn about local artefacts i.e. where they have come from and what they were used for. DD was pleased to confirm that the majority of contractors engaged for the Keeping Place build have all been local as the LALC have worked to ensure the money has stayed within this community and to the benefit of local business.

CQ advised that the Hunter IF Festival and Innovation Road Show will be held on 25 September 2025 at the City Hall in Newcastle. There are a number of great speakers booked to attend and the concept for discussions is across four streams; advanced manufacturing, what future energy will look like, the health space and aerospace. CQ offered an invitation for BHP to be involved, CQ felt it might be interesting for some MAC employees or representatives to attend to see what opportunities are in those four streams. AW confirmed that MAC have an Employee Focus Group and agreed it could be worthwhile for them to attend to learn about these opportunities and bring them back.

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

JD provided an extensive overview on a MSC Pilot Project that involves targeting some buffer land for an Industrial Park. JD advised that approximately 35 business have approached MSC over the past 10 to 12 months regarding moving to the area. JD noted that these enquiries had come from a very broad range of industries, including but not limited to; aerospace, recycling, both small and large scale manufacturing and agribusiness.

MSC hope that MAC's buffer land may provide an opportunity to house and bring these businesses in as there is potential employment for a few thousand people. JD advised this land already has roads, power, water, facilities, so work that takes years to complete has already been done. JD noted that these types of projects take time and therefore should not wait until 2030.

JD acknowledged the State Government and BHP for their support in relation to considering opportunities for post mining land use. In addition, the Federal Government has provided \$5 million for a Master Plan. JD spoke in high regard about the dealings MSC has had with BHP in relation to future jobs and repurposing land. JD noted that geographically Muswellbrook is in a very good location in relation to the renewable energy businesses that travel through the area and new business that would like to move in. JD noted that by gaining an understanding on the sort of businesses that want to move to Muswellbrook and if there was strong interest from one particular industry, that would also assist with targeting workforce training towards that industry.

TW advised that MSC has undertaken a lot of work in relation to Major Projects. MSC had been engaging with community in relation to an influx of flying foxes noting they tend to move on when the food source has gone.

## **10. Land Management and Environment**

### **Rehabilitation and Land Management**

MAC were on track to reach their FY25 rehabilitation target of 135 hectares, with approximately 116 hectares seeded at the time of this meeting. CM identified works at the Outer Pit Dump East rehabilitation area and showing where the FY24 and FY25 areas were merging.

### **Environmental Monitoring Results (1 January to 31 March 2025)**

CM 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.

In relation to dust levels, WP queried how the DPHI deal with the cumulative impacts when a site's contribution has only been small. CM responded the proportion of BHP's contribution is only one part of the investigation and information that the DPHI review. BHP are required to provide detailed information on what had been undertaken on the day and demonstrate that MAC had taken reasonable and feasible measures to minimise dust both proactively and reactively. In addition MAC have alerts on overall dust levels in the area and anyone on site can report visual dust so that water carts can be activated.

MAC also have mechanisms to collaborate with surrounding mines via sharing their blast schedules and conducting cumulative framework meetings to review previous months and discuss if there had been any challenges during that period.

## **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**

To enable the CCC to provide their input on the Community Fund prior to the next meeting scheduled for 13 August 2025, WP confirmed that a feedback request will be circulated to members out of session.

## **12.Next Meetings**

- ✓ 13 August 2025
- ✓ 19 November 2025

## **14.Meeting Close**

WP closed the Meeting at 10.57 a.m. thanking members for their attendance.