

Ashton Community Consultative Committee Annual Report for 2018.

Community Consultative Committee Details

CCC / Project Name:	Ashton Coal Mine	Reporting Period:	January - December 2018
Independent Chairperson:	Margaret MacDonald-Hill	Proponent Contact:	Phillip Brown

1. Executive Summary

The Ashton Coal Mine Community Consultative Committee was established as part of a condition of consent by the Minister for Planning's October 2002 approval of Development Application 309/01 for an open cut coal mine, an underground coal mine and associated surface facilities, known as the Ashton Coal Project. The project is situated approximately fourteen kilometres north west of the town of Singleton in the Local Government Area of Singleton Shire and produces coal for the export market through the Port of Newcastle.

The Committee operates in accordance with the current version of the Department of Planning and Environment's Community Consultative Committee Guidelines for State Significant Projects. Meetings are held three times per year and the committee is comprised of:

- three local community representatives;
- one elected Singleton Shire Council representative;
- two Ashton Coal Mine representatives, with attendance from other personnel as required;
- one independent Chairperson.

The representation on the committee is one of continuity. One community representative is an original member from the committee's inaugural meeting held in November 2003 and the other community representatives have served between five to seven consecutive years. Council representation is equally static with the elected representative serving in a dual capacity as the former Chair for a decade. With such stability in membership, the collective knowledge of the committee is significant and a great asset to the efficacy of the committee and to Ashton personnel. As near neighbours and long term residents of the area, they are an integral part of the broader community and demonstrate a keen interest and commitment to their area. Regular interactions occurs with Ashton staff between meetings and a good rapport exists amongst all parties. While the committee is only small, meetings nevertheless are well attended and concise with well prepared agenda items and reports, together with detailed PowerPoint presentations given by Ashton representatives at each meeting.

Matters discussed during the reporting period varied from company reports and activities to the committee's interest in the demolition of Camberwell cottages, removal of obsolete signage near the New England Highway, weed control management, drought conditions and impacts on rehabilitation progress and a proposed inspection of Bowmans Creek diversion. Other topics of discussion also included:

- general environmental management and monitoring, including heritage, air quality, noise, surface water and groundwater
- operations and environmental activities updates, including incident reports
- community complaints
- broader community engagement and Yancoal Community Support Program
- 2017 Annual Review and Regulatory Reporting
- Yancoal land management including weeds and pest control

2. CCC activities over last 12 months

- Committee meetings were held in the months of February, June and October 2018.
- The committee has a stable attendance record with an occasional apology.
- A site visit of the Bowmans Creek diversion was planned during the reporting period but was postponed because of extreme weather conditions.
- There were no joint meetings held with other CCC's.
- Additional consultation activities occurred at the October meeting when the Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue presented to the committee. The committee discussed the negative media often associated with mining, noted there are many 'good news' stories such as the Bowmans Creek diversion and suggested these should be told for the information of the broader public.

3. Key issues

This committee has been meeting for nearly two decades now and there does not appear to be any emerging, major areas of concern that I am aware of. Since my appointment as Chair, I have observed Ashton personnel to be both timely and responsive to matters raised by all members as illustrated in those listed below.

Issue	Actions Taken	Next Steps
Green cestrum increase - risk to livestock	Listed as a priority target species by company.	Included in weed control management during March and August 2018.
Demolition of Camberwell cottages	Information on houses to be demolished provided to the committee.	Demolition works completed, all risks removed.
Request for visual	Company committed to additional tree planting to augment visual tree	Completed mid 2018.

screening along New England Highway	screening. Delayed because of drought conditions.	
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4. Focus for next 12 months

The planned activities for 2019 will be guided by the contributions of the CCC members. These activities are likely to include:

- site inspection of the Bowman's Creek Diversion
- interest in weed control
- review of ongoing environmental monitoring
- operational activities
- Yancoal community support program.

To the best of my knowledge, there are no outstanding or emerging issues that have not been addressed or are in the process of being so, to the committee's satisfaction.

Committee Meeting minutes and presentations are available on the website within two weeks of each meeting.

Signature of Chair:	
Date:	May 3 2019