
**MINUTES OF THE ASHTON COAL PROJECT
COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
TUESDAY 8 DECEMBER 2009
1:00PM - ASHTON COAL PROJECT SITE OFFICE**

ATTENDEES:

Brian Thomas	(BT)	Singleton Council
Godfrey Adamthwaite	(GA)	Singleton Council (Chairman)
Thelma DeJong	(TD)	Community Representative
John McInerney	(JMc)	Community Representative
Steve Ernst	(SE)	Community Representative
Peter Barton	(PB)	Company Rep (General Manager)
Lisa Richards	(LR)	Company Rep (Environment & Community Relations Mgr)
Adam Spargo	(AS)	Observer (Environmental Co-ordinator)
Luke Hamson	(LH)	Observer (Drill & Blast Engineer Short Term Planner)
Cassandra Ferguson		Minute Taker

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING BY THE CHAIRPERSON

The Chairman opened the meeting at 1.10pm.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Craig Campbell from the Department of Industry and Investment (DII) and Deidre Olofsson Community Representative.

AS advised the meeting that Craig has taken over from Greg Summerhayes as the DII officer assigned to Ashton Coal. The DII annual inspection was undertaken on the 8th December.

3. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST BY COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

Nil declared.

4. MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes from the meeting held on 8 September 2009 were accepted as a true and accurate record:

Moved: John McInerney

Seconded: Thelma DeJong

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**Action items for last meeting**

- 1) Follow up with the Parks department of the Singleton Council on the status of the Section 94 signage outstanding issues.

This was assigned to Sarah Roberts (SR) from Singleton Council. As SR was not present at the meeting AS gave an update on the status of this item. There had been an issue that SSC were unable to find the \$30,000 covering the design and construction of the signage. LR to confirm details of the payment made to Singleton Council.

The meeting held a discussion on the length of time it has taken to organise the signage. LR suggested to the CCC members that ACOL take over the process from SSC as this process is taking too long. Presently, SSC have approved the art designs however there is an issue with the Roads & Traffic Authority's requirement for the signs and engineering approval for the designs are still outstanding. It was agreed by community members that ACOL take over the process. AS is to chase up a quote for signage design with Kim Horne from SSC and organise. The quote will be sent out to all CCC members for approval. Once approved, AS will then organise engineering/ construction designs to be done.

- 2) Confirm the consent requirement for number of water carts operating.

This was assigned to LR. LR advised that there was no condition within the consent specifying the number of water carts required to be operating. PB commented that 4 water carts are run on site. GA asked the meeting who bought up the query and if they were happy with the outcome. JMc replied that it was him and the reason he bought it up was that he believed it was a requirement that 2 water carts had to be running at all times and 1 on standby. PB replied that it is not a requirement however that is how Ashton operates the water carts on site.

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6. REPORTS AND OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

6.1 OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Underground

PB provided the meeting with an update of site operations. Underground operations in Longwall 4 has finished and has been sealed with a new method using nitrogen injection. Operations are currently moving into Longwall 5. Mining in Longwall 5 will commence prior to the Christmas period. Underground development is currently progressing behind budget.

South East Open Cut

The South East Open Cut (SEOC) project is on public exhibition until Monday 18 January, 2010. Copies of the Environmental Assessment (EA) report have been given to 18 government agencies and 4 Camberwell private property owners.

1 Hard copy of the report was given to CCC member TDJ.

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Each CCC member will advise community members that TDJ has a hard copy of the EA and CD's available if they would like any information on the project.

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Detailed design works are currently being conducted to ensure if approved, there is minimum lag time between the completion of NEOC operations and the start of construction on the SEOC project. LH advised that the first coal extraction is aimed for October – November 2010. TDJ asked LR if there was still private property within the SEOC project area. LR replied there was and advised the approval process can still continue without purchasing properties. SE asked if private properties cannot be purchased can the SEOC proceed. LR replied the project may be able to start without Ashton acquiring all properties dependent on the consent condition requirements. A few of the CCC members queried the boundaries of the SEOC project and what private properties were included in the area LR highlighted project boundaries on an aerial plan.

JMc also asked LR to point out where the conveyor will cross Glennies Creek. SE queried how much the conveyor installation and operation will disrupt New England Highway traffic LR replied that at this stage, the time length disruptions was unknown, as the detailed construction design work is currently being undertaken.

SE asked LR if a scope of works had been completed for the relocation of the two powerlines. LR replied that 2 options are included in the Environmental Assessment, however these do not need to be moved until the 2nd year of the project.

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BT asked LR how long it will be before the bund wall is seeded LR advised that seeding will be completed progressively as soon as the bund stops are made available.

LR offered to run through the pit progression plans. Members did want to go through progression plans.

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Open Cut (Camberwell Common Cracking)

PB provided the meeting with some information regarding the cracking occurring in the Common. The North East Open Cut (NEOC) had original cracks along Glennies Creek Road however further cracking has occurred. To address this a solid buttress was constructed which sterilized 200,000 tonnes of coal.

BT asked if the stabilisation works had stopped the cracking?

TDJ replied that it had not according to the article regarding cracks in the common in today's edition of The Singleton Argus.

PB advised the meeting that the cracks had not moved in four weeks and geotechnical investigations had been conducted. Also following today's Argus report the site Geologist had inspect the common today and found existing cracking had not extended and there were no additional cracks identified. He could also find no evidence of movement towards the creek.

GA asked if rehabilitation was being conducted of the site PB replied the yes it would, however there have been issues with getting access to the common land as the trust had not approved access, this has however now been resolved. There was further discussion and a description of the cracks and the mechanism for how they formed. Also the presence of additional sinkholes and cracks in the lower sections of the common were discussed and that they were not caused by the current mining. TDJ advised that the landscape of the area has changed as the creek has moved. There used to be an old house in the area that was washed away in one of the original floods.

PB provided TDJ a copy of the geotechnical investigation report to pass onto DO.

SE questioned the risks associated with the cracking. LR advised that the main risk is that the slip is moving away from the common toward the pit, as discussed earlier there has been no movement in the last 4 weeks. Geotechnical assessments are currently being conducted.

JMc asked what is the expected life of mine for the NEOC now the 200,000 tonnes of coal has been sterilised. PB advised production in the NEOC will finish around November – December 2010.

Underground

BT queried if any water from Glennies Creek was going into the underground mine. PB advised that yes at a rate of 0.17ML/day which is half of the volume predicted in the original Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). LR advised that this is not occurring due to cracking caused by mining as has been reported in the local press. BT replied that the issue had been raised at another mine's CCC meeting on Friday. PB reiterated that yes water from Glennies was going into the underground workings, however, at a rate approximately 60% of what was predicted in the EIS. GA asked if that water then gets pumped out from the underground workings and used in the washery. PB replied yes. LR advised that the water flow occurring between Glennies Creek and underground workings has been reviewed as part of a number of compliance audits and is reported within the sites Annual Environmental Management Report (AEMR) to all agencies. High security water license has been secured with the Department of Water and Energy (DWE) to account for the water intake.

Bowmans Creek Diversion

PB advised the meeting that the Bowmans Creek Diversion Project will be on public exhibition from Friday the 11 December until Monday 18 January, 2010. Copies of the Environmental Assessment will be distributed to the CCC.

6.2 ENVIRONMENTAL**DUST MONITORING**

LR provided an overview of the dust monitoring sites and results for the three month period. LR advised that for the days where dust storms were experienced, the dust monitors were unable to record results.

BLASTING

A total of 32 blasts were conducted during the 3 month period. LR reported the blast monitor in the village may be having calibration issues and the results are currently not available. An investigation is underway the results of which will be presented at the next CCC meeting (16 March, 2010).

TDJ reported that there have been shots from other operations where she has experienced high vibration at her house. TDJ asked if Ashton gauge can pick up the vibrations from other mine blasts LR replied yes. LR advised that other mines in the area have higher vibration limits, 5mm/s compared to Ashton's 2mm/s so you may experience higher vibrations from other operations with them still being in compliance. PB asked TDJ if the high vibrations have been associated with any of the Ashton shots TDJ replied no and thought the blasts may have originated from mines located at the back of her property.

LR advised the meeting than an blast overpressure exceedence >120dBA, occurred on Friday 4 December, 2009, at St. Clements Church. It was due to a hole not being stemmed which caused a blow out. Ashton received no complaints regarding the blast. The village blast results were <120dBA. The exceedence were reported to the relevant government authorities (DECC & DII) on Friday 4 December.

WATER MONITORING

LR provided an overview of the surface and ground water monitoring results for the three month period.

NOISE MONITORING

Statutory noise monitoring was undertaken on the 30th November and there were no exceedances of the Ashton criteria.

REHABILITATION

The rehabilitation program is progressing on schedule. An alternative organic amendment to OGM was used in the October rehabilitation, now waiting rain. BT asked how clean the Organic Growth Medium (OGM) was JMc replied that it had visible glass and plastic in it. AS replied to JMc that the OGM he has seen was some of the original deliveries and that there have been significant improvements since this however there is still some small glass visible.

8. GENERAL BUSINESS

LR advised the meeting that the Annual Environmental Management Report (AEMR) is now complete. The monitoring results reported in this document reported at the last CCC meeting (8 September, 2009).

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9. DATE FOR NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 16 March 2010 @ 1.00PM

10. SITE INSPECTION OF THE OPERATIONS – Not conducted

11. DOCUMENTS DISTRIBUTED -

Annual Environmental Management Report (AEMR) – All
South East Open Cut Environmental Assessment – All CD, TDJ Hard copy.
Common Cracking Geotechnical Report - TDJ

MEETING CLOSED AT 2.50PM

ACTION ITEMS

ITEM	RESPONSIBILITY
To review historic aerial plans of Camberwell and locate the old mine within the Common area	LR
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Each member of the CCC received a CD.

As the EA reports are quite large copies of the report on CD are being handed out to interested parties.

Printed out copies of the report can be seen by

- contacting the CCC,
- at the Singleton Council offices where the project is on public exhibition
- can be downloaded from both the Ashton Coal (<http://www.ashtoncoal.com.au/SEOpenCutReports.aspx>) and
- Department of Planning websites (http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=search&status_id=6).

Each CCC member will advise community members that TDJ has a hard copy of the EA and CD's available if they would like any information on the project.

SE queried a timeline for the SEOC project as community members have approached him and asked him about the project. LR replied that after the public exhibition period finishes on Monday 18 January, 2010, it is expected to be 3 months until final project assessment is complete. If approved, construction is planned to commence immediately, which is estimated to be May 2010.

Detailed design works are currently being conducted to ensure if approved, there is minimum lag time between the completion of NEOC operations and the start of construction on the SEOC project. LH advised that the first coal extraction is aimed for October – November 2010. TDJ asked LR if there was still private property within the SEOC project area. LR replied there was and advised the approval process can still continue without purchasing properties. SE asked if private properties cannot be purchased can the SEOC proceed. LR replied the project may be able to start without Ashton acquiring all properties dependent on the consent condition requirements. A few of the CCC members queried the boundaries of the SEOC project and what private properties were included in the area LR highlighted project boundaries on an aerial plan.

JMc also asked LR to point out where the conveyor will cross Glennies Creek. SE queried how much the conveyor installation and operation will disrupt New England Highway traffic LR replied that at this stage, the time length disruptions was unknown, as the detailed construction design work is currently being undertaken.

SE asked LR if a scope of works had been completed for the relocation of the two powerlines. LR replied that 2 options are included in the Environmental Assessment, however these do not need to be moved until the 2nd year of the project.

BT queried how high the bund wall will be LR replied that it will be at approximately RL115 at the top of the dump and decreasing down slope. LH advised that it will be approximately 30-40 metres above lower points of the existing landform. LR added that it is designed to be lower than the surrounding landform peaks.

BT asked LR how long it will be before the bund wall is seeded LR advised that seeding will be completed progressively as soon as the bund stops are made available.

LR offered to run through the pit progression plans. Members did want to go through progression plans.

JMc asked if hybrids will be allowed as part of the consent condition. LR replied that it was not specified if hybrids or native trees will be utilised, however pasture will be seeded into the bund as soon as possible. For quick cover along with trees. LR advised the meeting that Ashton Coal are awaiting the results of an ACARP project (Sustainable landscape design for coal mining rehabilitation – Reference number 28014) that is researching land form based on catchment area and utilising undulating designs connecting different areas. JMc raised that as well as covering the bund with pasture an area the community would like to the area to be aesthetically pleasing and covered with trees. LR replied that rehabilitation details will be specified in the Mining Operations Plan (MOP).

Open Cut (Camberwell Common Cracking)

PB provided the meeting with some information regarding the cracking occurring in the Common. The North East Open Cut (NEOC) had original cracks along Glennies Creek Road however further cracking has occurred. To address this a solid buttress was constructed which sterilized 200,000 tonnes of coal.

BT asked if the stabilisation works had stopped the cracking?

TDJ replied that it had not according to the article regarding cracks in the common in today's edition of The Singleton Argus.

PB advised the meeting that the cracks had not moved in four weeks and geotechnical investigations had been conducted. Also following today's Argus report the site Geologist had inspect the common today and found existing cracking had not extended and there were no additional cracks identified. He could also find no evidence of movement towards the creek.

GA asked if rehabilitation was being conducted of the site PB replied the yes it would, however there have been issues with getting access to the common land as the trust had not approved access, this has however now been resolved. There was further discussion and a description of the cracks and the mechanism for how they formed. Also the presence of additional sinkholes and cracks in the lower sections of the common were discussed and that they were not caused by the current mining. TDJ advised that the landscape of the area has changed as the creek has moved. There used to be an old house in the area that was washed away in one of the original floods.

PB provided TDJ a copy of the geotechnical investigation report to pass onto DO.

SE questioned the risks associated with the cracking. LR advised that the main risk is that the slip is moving away from the common toward the pit, as discussed earlier there has been no movement in the last 4 weeks. Geotechnical assessments are currently being conducted.

JMc asked what is the expected life of mine for the NEOC now the 200,000 tonnes of coal has been sterilised. PB advised production in the NEOC will finish around November – December 2010.

Underground

BT queried if any water from Glennies Creek was going into the underground mine. PB advised that yes at a rate of 0.17ML/day which is half of the volume predicted in the original Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). LR advised that this is not occurring due to cracking caused by mining as has been reported in the local press. BT replied that the issue had been raised at another mine's CCC meeting on Friday. PB reiterated that yes water from Glennies was going into the underground workings, however, at a rate approximately 60% of what was predicted in the EIS. GA asked if that water then gets pumped out from the underground workings and used in the washery. PB replied yes. LR advised that the water flow occurring between Glennies Creek and underground workings has been reviewed as part of a number of compliance audits and is reported within the sites Annual Environmental Management Report (AEMR) to all agencies. High security water license has been secured with the Department of Water and Energy (DWE) to account for the water intake.

Bowmans Creek Diversion

PB advised the meeting that the Bowmans Creek Diversion Project will be on public exhibition from Friday the 11 December until Monday 18 January, 2010. Copies of the Environmental Assessment will be distributed to the CCC.

6.2 ENVIRONMENTAL**DUST MONITORING**

LR provided an overview of the dust monitoring sites and results for the three month period. LR advised that for the days where dust storms were experienced, the dust monitors were unable to record results.

BLASTING

A total of 32 blasts were conducted during the 3 month period. LR reported the blast monitor in the village may be having calibration issues and the results are currently not available. An investigation is underway the results of which will be presented at the next CCC meeting (16 March, 2010).

TDJ reported that there have been shots from other operations where she has experienced high vibration at her house. TDJ asked if Ashton gauge can pick up the vibrations from other mine blasts LR replied yes. LR advised that other mines in the area have higher vibration limits, 5mm/s compared to Ashton's 2mm/s so you may experience higher vibrations from other operations with them still being in compliance. PB asked TDJ if the high vibrations have been associated with any of the Ashton shots TDJ replied no and thought the blasts may have originated from mines located at the back of her property.

LR advised the meeting than an blast overpressure exceedence >120dBA, occurred on Friday 4 December, 2009, at St. Clements Church. It was due to a hole not being stemmed which caused a blow out. Ashton received no complaints regarding the blast. The village blast results were <120dBA. The exceedence were reported to the relevant government authorities (DECC & DII) on Friday 4 December.

WATER MONITORING

LR provided an overview of the surface and ground water monitoring results for the three month period.

NOISE MONITORING

Statutory noise monitoring was undertaken on the 30th November and there were no exceedances of the Ashton criteria.

REHABILITATION

The rehabilitation program is progressing on schedule. An alternative organic amendment to OGM was used in the October rehabilitation, now waiting rain. BT asked how clean the Organic Growth Medium (OGM) was JMc replied that it had visible glass and plastic in it. AS replied to JMc that the OGM he has seen was some of the original deliveries and that there have been significant improvements since this however there is still some small glass visible.

8. GENERAL BUSINESS

LR advised the meeting that the Annual Environmental Management Report (AEMR) is now complete. The monitoring results reported in this document reported at the last CCC meeting (8 September, 2009).

A copy of the AEMR has been distributed to all CCC members and is also available on the Ashton Coal website.

9. DATE FOR NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 16 March 2010 @ 1.00PM

10. SITE INSPECTION OF THE OPERATIONS – Not conducted**11. DOCUMENTS DISTRIBUTED -**

Annual Environmental Management Report (AEMR) – All
South East Open Cut Environmental Assessment – All CD, TDJ Hard copy.
Common Cracking Geotechnical Report - TDJ

MEETING CLOSED AT 2.50PM

ACTION ITEMS

ITEM	RESPONSIBILITY
To review historic aerial plans of Camberwell and locate the old mine within the Common area	LR
Contact SSC regarding Section 94 Signage get a design quote from SSC send out to CCC member for approval then organise engineering/ construction designs to be done.	AS
Assess village blast monitor to determine if it is experiencing calibration issues	LR/AS