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**MINUTES OF THE ASHTON COAL PROJECT  
COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE  
TUESDAY 16 MARCH 2010  
1:00PM - ASHTON COAL PROJECT SITE OFFICE**

**ATTENDEES:**

Godfrey Adamthwaite	(GA)	Singleton Council (Chairman)
Thelma DeJong	(TD)	Community Representative
Steve Ernst	(SE)	Community Representative
Brian Chilcott	(BC)	Company Rep (Open Cut Mining Manager)
Lisa Richards	(LR)	Company Rep (Environment & Community Relations Mgr)
Adam Spargo	(AS)	Observer (Environmental Co-ordinator)
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 and Deidre Olofsson and John McInernery Community Representatives, and Brian Thomas, Singleton Council.

**3. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST BY COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES**

Nil declared.

**4. MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

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

**Moved:** Steve Ernst

**Seconded:** Thelma DeJong

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

- 1) LR advised she was unable to find the old mine on the historical aerial plans of the Camberwell Common. TDJ asked LR if she had searched in the book "*The Glennies Creek Story*" and highlighted that an earthquake tremor had occurred on two occasions at the turn of the century and in 1914 affected land north of an area known as Tank Mountain.
- 2) Section 94 Signage update – AS advised the Camberwell village signage design drawing has been finalised. The development application for installation of the signs

is currently with Singleton Council for approval. The designs have been approved by the Roads & Traffic Authority (RTA), with a modification to the lettering material. The RTA has requested the lettering be done in reflective material for safety reasons. Kim from the Singleton Shire Council (SSC) is currently getting quotes for construction of the sign.

Assess village blast monitor to determine if it is experiencing calibration issues – Tests were conducted on the village blast monitor to ensure results from the unit were accurate. To test the unit a portable blast monitor was placed next to the unit. Results received confirmed the village unit was reading accurately.

## **6. REPORTS AND OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES**

### **6.1 OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS**

#### **South East Open Cut**

LR provided an overview of the South East Open Cut (SEOC) project. The SEOC came off exhibition on the 18 January 2010 submissions have been received and Ashton is in the process of responding to submissions. Final submissions from some of the government agencies are due this week. Ashton is planning to have responses to the Department of Planning (DoP) in the next two weeks. It is envisaged approval will be received by the end of April, dependent on the DoP assessment process.

LR advised that ACOL are currently progressing with detailed design of the SEOC project area, prior to receiving approval, to minimize cross over time between current North East Open Cut operations and the transition to the SEOC. SE asked how long the proposed road widening and access road construction to the SEOC is planned for. LR replied the designs had not yet been finalized and consultation with the RTA was still being conducted. LR will contact the designers and advise SE of a planned construction time next meeting. LR added that during the road widening and access road construction there would not be a complete diversion of the road or closure of the New England Highway. BC added that the works would focus on the shoulder of the NEH. TDJ asked if the road needs to be completed prior to the commencement of mining operations LR replied that if approved it would be completed prior to commencement of mining operations, however if not completed, alternate access, via Glennies Street to the SEOC area would be used.

SE asked if the existing workforce would be utilised for construction of the SEOC. LR replied that where possible, this would be the case, however civil contracting companies would be bought in for specific civil works (e.g. levee pad construction). LR advised that machinery from the current NEOC operations would be transported to the SEOC. SE asked if ACOL would be completing the topsoil stripping LR replied yes, however a contractor would be utilised for the tree removal.

#### **Open Cut (Camberwell Common Cracking)**

AS did a presentation on remediation strategy to subsidence cracking occurring in the Camberwell common. SE asked what type of turf was used AS replied kikuyu LR added kikuyu was used as it will not require long term watering. TDJ asked about the cracks further down from the already existing cracks. LR replied that Ashton had only been

notified of further cracking events by the article in today's edition of the Newcastle Herald. LR explained to the meeting that the additional cracking was not from new movement, rather they were stress relief cracks occurring around the initial crack. LR advised the initial crack were being monitored and inspected weekly and no further movement had been observed. Monitoring of the movement has shown that it is toward the pit and away from the creek. Geotechnical assessments indicate that there is no risk to Glennies Creek. LR advised that this monitoring and inspection will be ongoing. A geotechnical expert will also be out on site on Friday to conduct further inspections of the extent of the stress cracking reported today. TDJ asked about cracks down in the gully LR replied that the cracking does not extend into the gully TDJ replied that she thought it did. LR replied that geotechnical inspections had been completed of the gully area and found there were no further events of major cracking in the gully area. LR discussed that the cracking seen in the base of the gully area is not connected to the subsidence cracking occurring higher up in the gully. LR advised that if cattle could be removed from the common equipment could be used to fix gully slips. TDJ advised that the cattle were moved as soon as the cracks were found.

TDJ and SE were given a copy of the Camberwell Common Crack Remediation Report. A copy of the report has also been sent to the Common trust.

### **Underground**

LR provided an update of the underground operations. Ashton is currently conducting mining operations in Longwall 5. The next planned longwall moved to Longwall 6 is scheduled for June 2010.

### **Bowmans Creek Diversion**

LR advised the meeting that the Bowmans Creek Diversion (BCD) project was on the same timeframe as the SEOC. The majority of submissions have been received. Responses will be finalised once all relevant government agencies submissions are received. ACOL have received no indication if the project will be approved. 10 submissions have been received from the public. SE asked how the approval of BCD will affect the underground mine scheduling LR replied the UG production schedule is tight and contingencies will be put in place,, however these are yet to be finalized and approved by relevant government agencies.

## **6.2 ENVIRONMENTAL**

### **DUST MONITORING**

LR provided an overview of the dust monitoring sites and results for the three month period. Ashton Coal did not exceed their PM<sub>10</sub> criteria during the quarter

### **BLASTING**

A total of 37 blasts were conducted during the 3 month period. A blast exceedence >120dBA occurred on the 6 January. Following further investigation it was identified that the exceedence was the result of insufficient stemming height due to the ingress of thick mud into a number of the blast holes. The shot had been drilled prior to the heavy rain experienced during the last week of December leading to the mud issue. The drill holes had been dipped, however due to mud the stemming was suspended within the hole. A report to the DECCW, DII and DoP was submitted detailing the cause of the exceedence. A warning letter has been received from the DECCW regarding the exceedence.

In response to the exceedence Ashton conducted an internal audit of all drill & blast procedures. No further exceedences have been experienced and drill holes are now being coned to stop water and mud dispersing into the holes.

A penalty infringement notice was received from the DECC regarding the blast exceedence recorded on the 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2009.

TDJ reported continued vibration of her house caused by other mining operations blasting and noted that her roof had rattled at 12pm yesterday during a blasting event from another mine. LR highlighted that other mining operations within the area have blast criteria of 5mm/s in comparison to Ashton's 2mm/s. BC & LR advised TDJ to contact other surrounding mining operations and asked to be put on their blasting notification telephone list to assist in identifying the origin of the blasts.

#### **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 11 February and there were no exceedances of the Ashton criteria.

#### **REHABILITATION**

AS gave a presentation on the progression of ACOs rehabilitation. 12ha of rehabilitation is planned for autumn 2010 including 8ha pasture, 4ha native woodland and 600m rock lined drop structure. To date a total of 106ha rehabilitation completed includes 67ha pasture, 36ha native woodland and 3ha dams.

SE asked AS what was being done about galenia control. AS advised that the DPI are conducting trials on site for treatments of galenia in tree blocks. In the pasture blocks grazon is being used to spray galenia. Once sprayed, the blocks are then being heavily reseeded with pasture.

### **8. GENERAL BUSINESS**

TDJ has had a request from the walkers in Camberwell to slash the grass in the paddock along McInerney Road. SE asked who is responsible for the slashing of the grass along the Camberwell section of the New England Highway LR replied the RTA.

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**9. DATE FOR NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 15 June 2010 @ 1.00PM

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

Camberwell Common Crack Remediation Report

**MEETING CLOSED AT 2.27PM****ACTION ITEMS**

ITEM	RESPONSIBILITY