
**MINUTES OF THE ASHTON COAL PROJECT
COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
TUESDAY 20 MARCH 2012
1.40PM - ASHTON COAL PROJECT SITE OFFICE**

ATTENDEES:

Steve Ernst	(SE)	Community Representative
Michael Bestic	(MB)	Community Representative
Godfrey Adamthwaite	(GA)	Singleton Council (Chairperson)
Brian Thomas	(BT)	Singleton Council Representative
Brian Wesley	(BW)	Company Rep (General Manager)
Lisa Richards	(LR)	Company Rep (Environment & Community Relations Mgr)
Scotney Moore	(SM)	Company Rep (Environment Coordinator)
Cassandra Ferguson	(CF)	Minute Taker

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING BY THE CHAIRPERSON

The Chairman opened the meeting at 1:40pm.

2. APOLOGIES

Nil.

3. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST BY COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

Nil

MB arrived at 1:43pm

4. MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes from the meeting held on 6 December 2011 were accepted as a true and accurate record:

Moved: Steve Ernst **Seconded:** Scotney Moore

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Section 94 – Town signage – Construction works of the town signage are near completion. Singleton Council will slash grass surrounding signs once building is complete.

An advertisement for the vacant CCC position will be placed in the next ACOL newsletter. To be sent out by ACOL prior to next CCC meeting in June.

6. REPORTS AND OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

6.1 OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Underground & Bowmans Creek Diversion Project

GA asked BW a question regarding subsidence impacts to Brunkers Lane. BW replied the predicted impact is up to 1200mm for the first seam and Ravensworth North have allowed for this subsidence within the Lemington Road realignment design. BW advised Longwall 8 is a narrower block compared to previous longwall blocks at ACOL due to mining lease constraints.

Mining operations are currently in Longwall 8 which is located near Brunkers Lane. Development of Longwall 101 within the Upper Liddell Seam has been pulled short due to a thickening rock band within that area of the seam. Longwall mining is planned to move to the Upper Liddell (ULD) seam in Longwall 101 in approximately July. Archaeological salvage works are currently being completed in Longwall 101 surface area. An increase in subsidence impacts is expected for the next seam due to multi-seam subsidence. The depth from the surface to the mined areas of the ULD seam is approximately 70-75m at the shallowest point.

Bowmans Creek Diversion Project

The western diversion of the project is currently being constructed. Wet weather caused delays on the eastern diversion. ACOL are waiting for a dry weather period to complete trimming works on the eastern diversion. At this stage it is anticipated both diversions (eastern and western) will be completed in 4-5 months. No issues regarding water storage have occurred. Once the eastern creek diversion is constructed and functioning longwall mining will commence in Longwall 6B.

North East Open Cut (NEOC)

BW advised the NEOC is no longer producing. Rehabilitation works are ongoing.

South East Open Cut (SEOC)

The Planning and Assessment Commission (PAC) rejected the project application in December 2011. The main issues for the decision were dust and impacts to groundwater associated with Glennies Creek.

ACOL were given 3 months to lodge an appeal. ACOL lodged two appeals under the Class 1 & 4 act. The two appeals made are:

- Judicial Review – which will look at the decision making process conducted by the PAC and if the correct process was undertaken. ACOL have identified as a flaw that the PAC did not wait for the addendum report from the Department of Planning and Infrastructure (DoPI) before making their decision. The judicial review is a faster process than the Merits Appeal.
- Merits Appeal – The merits of the project are reviewed by the court, i.e. a review of the Environmental assessment. The court is then charged with making a decision on the project. The court has the ability to overturn the decision of the PAC and grant the SEOC approval or they may uphold the decision of the PAC. In the court undertaking they may seek to hear from experts relating to the areas of assessment, i.e. dust, water etc.

A directions hearing will be held on 30 March which will set out timeframes for the case.

Open Cut personnel were retrenched on the 21 December, 2011. GA asked how many personnel were retrenched BW replied approximately 70-100 people. BW replied only 1 open cut production and 1 maintenance employee remain on site.

SE asked if the personnel who were retrenched have been able to gain other full time employment BW replied unsure of exact number.

SE asked who hears the judicial review LR replied the Land and Environment Court. This will take approximately 1-2 days to look at procedures and process. A discussion on the predicted timelines for the decisions on the appeal took place.

6.1 PROJECTS OVERVIEW

Ventilation Development Consent Modification

BW advised ACOL on 1 March submitted Modification 9 - for construction of 5.5m diameter upcast ventilation shaft, two extraction fans, ducting and support facilities and construction of two mine service drop holes (1m in diameter). The project is currently on public exhibition. GA asked how deep the shaft is proposed to be BW replied the raisebore will be 100 – 110 metres deep. The shaft will be constructed to the Upper Liddell Seam (the next deepest seam underlying the Pikes Gully Seam) and will be designed to provide efficient and adequate ventilation for the deeper seams, as the mine progresses.

Gas Drainage Network Development Consent Modification

Work on the development consent modification for the gas drainage network is currently in the final stages. As discussed in previous meetings ACOL are proposing to install a series of vertical boreholes of various depths through which goaf gas, mainly methane will be drained from the goafs of Longwalls 1-8 via a surface pipeline reticulation system connected to a central gas extraction plant. The proposal will maintain underground levels of methane below 2% and minimise gas within the goaf from entering the mine workings and ventilation system. Existing goaf gas drainage has been undertaken during extraction of Longwalls 6A and 7A of the Pikes Gully seam. Currently drainage is undertaken utilising a mobile gas drainage plant. ACOL plans to submit the modification in April 2012.

Discussions on how the gas will be drained took place BW advised currently the gas was free venting and this will occur early in the development however long term the central gas drainage plant will be utilised, and the gas will be flared. Opportunities to beneficially utilise the gas are also being explored.

Extraction Plan

BW provided details on the Extraction Plan. He advised CCC meeting attendees that Extraction Plans (EP) will now be replacing Subsidence Management Plans (SMP). LR advised copies of the EPs will be distributed for review by various agencies.

6.3 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 PM₁₀ criteria during the quarter.

Blasting

No blasting has occurred since September 2011.

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 in August and there were no exceedences of the Ashton criteria.

Complaints

There were 2 complaints and no enquiries over the period. The complaints were in relation to noise and cultural heritage works.

Environmentally-Related Operations Changes

Nil environmental related operational changes were made during the reporting period.

7. NSW MINERALS COUNCIL UPPER HUNTER MINING DIALOGUE

SM is planned to attend a meeting to look at potential weed management locations for the Rehabilitation Working Group in April.

8. GENERAL BUSINESSRehabilitation Progress

BT asked for an update on the rehabilitation progress. LR advised the southern rehabilitation slope facing the New England Highway is to be seeded by end of March pending weather and contractor availability.

LR discussed trees located on top of dump area. The top of dump laydown area has been cleared and rock racking and top soil spreading has been completed. By the end of May all rehabilitation will be done until rejects emplacement has been completed. The main shaping was completed by ACOL operators.

Rehabilitation will include trees and pasture. BT asked LR if by the end of financial year all of the rehabilitation scheduled to be completed will be LR replied yes and advised the rehabilitation schedule is 12 months ahead as ACOL operators were able to complete a lot of the earthworks.

MB asked about sustainability of rehabilitation works and asked about research in the long term on the rehabilitation works. LR replied ACOL's target is for the rehabilitation to be a mix of ecosystem & grazing. ACOL are focused on a biodiversity corridor, which fits with the Hunter Synoptic plan. Discussions were held on linkage on a local and regional scale, and how the success of rehabilitation is determined. LR advised continual monitoring is conducted on the rehabilitation post mining. ACOL can look at ongoing establishment through the monitoring method used by ACOL, Landscape Functionality Analysis (LFA) which also considers the function of the local area. This monitoring is conducted on an annual basis.

MB requested some information on the Community projects ran by ACOL (e.g. donations, scholarships, etc). BW advised ACOL sponsor a variety of community events including the Singleton Council Mayoral Scholarship Program, Westpac Rescue Helicopter, WUPA @ Wanaurah local art exhibition held by Ungooroo Aboriginal Corporation and other local individuals (e.g. sporting representatives) who contact ACOL directly. ACOL do not have a specific targeted Community Support program and criteria the recipients must adhere to unlike larger mining operations.

SM advised JMc had contacted him during the quarter requesting information on noise of the breaker located at the ROM pad. During the quarter the breaker located on the

ROM pad which receives coal from the underground mine had a safety inspection conducted which identified that the fibreglass insulation was damaged in some areas by water and that some of sections were required to be removed as there was a possible health risk to operators from fibro glass fibres. ACOL's noise consultant Neil Pennington advised the fibreglass insulation did not reduce noise however was installed to reduce vibration to the concrete. Based on this the removal of the fibre glass would have no increase on noise impacts to Camberwell. Work is currently being completed on looking into the different materials to replace the fibre glass. BW requested SM to commission the noise consultant to conduct a review of the current noise level of the breaker station. **Action Item** – SM to organise for noise monitoring on breaker to be completed and report back to community.

BT asked if an inspection of the Bowmans Creek Diversion project could be undertaken next meeting LR replied yes it can be organised to be held before the meeting and sandwiches can be provided for lunch between the site visit and meeting.

LR provided information on work ACOL are currently completing with the Wonnarua Nation as part of the Native Title Deed. A business opportunity is currently being developed for a nursery venture in Camberwell. The nursery will provide tree planting and associated services to ACOL with the aim of growing the business to supply goods and labour to other mine sites and industry. A Business Plan is currently being developed.

8. DATE FOR NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 26 June 2012 @ 1.30PM Site visit Bowmans Creek Diversion Project
2.30PM CCC Meeting ACOL Boardroom

MEETING CLOSED 3:08pm

ACTION ITEMS	
ITEM	RESPONSIBILITY
CCC member advertisement to be placed in next ACOL newsletter	LR 01/06/2012
SM to organise for noise monitoring on breaker to be completed and report back to community	SM 01/06/2012