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**MINUTES OF THE ASHTON COAL PROJECT  
COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE  
TUESDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2007  
1.00PM - ASHTON COAL PROJECT SITE OFFICE**

**ATTENDEES:**

Cr Fred Harvison	(FH)	Singleton Council (Chairman)
Sarah Roberts	(SR)	Singleton Council
Thelma DeJong	(TD)	Community Representative
Deidre Olofsson	(DO)	Community Representative
Paul Ashford	(PA)	Community Representative
John McInerney	(JM)	Community Representative
Peter Barton	(PB)	Company Rep (General Manager)
Lisa Richards	(LR)	Company Rep (Environment & Community Relations Manager)
Adam Spargo	(AS)	Minute Taker (Environmental Coordinator)

**1. OPENING OF THE MEETING BY THE CHAIRPERSON**

The Chairman opened the meeting at 1.10pm.

**2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Greg Summerhayes (Department of Primary Industries) and Brian Thomas (Singleton Shire Council).

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

Nil declared.

**4. MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

Minutes from the meeting held on 19 June 2007 were accepted as a true and accurate record:

**Moved:** *Thelma DeJong*

**Seconded:** *Paul Ashford*

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## 5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

PB indicated that the markings for Glennies Creek Road had been looked at and were within the standards required. FH included that line markings were a little deceiving.

JM asked about the status of the section 94 contribution. LR indicated that this was covered later in the presentation.

## 6. REPORTS AND OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

### 6.1 PROJECT MANAGEMENT – KEY ISSUES

#### **Glennies Creek Road**

PB advised that all works on Glennies Creek were completed and that Ashton is waiting on a final response from council. The area affected by the cracking is stable with no further cracking.

#### **CHPP Construction**

The CHPP construction is completed and the plant is operating well.

#### **MacGen Tailings Disposal Project**

The construction of the tailings dam and pipeline is completed and operating well.

PB indicated that the only issue is greater than expected water loss from the dam and we are currently trying to overcome this problem.

JM inquired about the project past the truck depot along the New England Highway.

PB pointed out that it was the instillation of a new ventilation shaft for Newpac Colliery.

PB informed the meeting that Ashton was in the process of installing a smaller pipe diameter to reduce the water requirements of the tailings line to the tailings dam.

JM enquired about the purchasing of Glennies Creek water and believed that Ashton Coal stated in the EIS that they would not require any water from the river systems.

PB produced the EIS and indicated that it states 300ML of water would be sourced from the Hunter River and Glennies Creek in year 5 (2007) of the project.

#### **Production**

PB indicated that production was up due to good progress in both the Underground and Open Cut. There have been some problems getting the coal to the port due to the rail system.

### 6.2 OPERATIONS OVERVIEW

LR provided an update of the current open cut and underground operations.

FH asked what the remediation works for subsidence involved.

LR explained that this referred to the repair of subsidence cracks that occurred along the longwall panel. Described how the cracks form and self heal and indicated that cracks that do not self heal are filled in with a small excavator, top soiled and then seeded.

DO asked when the open cut closes.

LR explained that open cut mining operations will be completed in 2010 with rehabilitation and tailings emplacement continuing past this point.

JM indicated that a good crop has come up on the slopes but questioned if there was anything perennial underneath.

LR indicated that a number of species were seeded including legumes, couch and kikuyu.

DO inquired if the mine plan was changed due to dust exceedences.

LR responded that the mine plan was changed for a number of reasons one of which was to alleviate the environmental impacts on Camberwell which includes dust, noise and blasting.

### 6.3 ENVIRONMENTAL

LR provided the meeting with an update of the environmental monitoring data with respect to dust, noise, water and blasting issues.

DO asked if the 5.4% exceedence of overpressure is reported to the EPA.

LR indicated that it is in the EPL annual return and the Annual Environmental Management Report (AEMR) submitted at the end of October.

LR described the high overpressure blast exceedence that occurred during July.

PA asked what the vibration level was like for the blast.

LR indicated that it was low (<2mm/s). LR went on further to describe that generally when a high overpressure result occurs the vibration is low because all of the energy is allowed to escape into the air rather than remaining in the ground.

FH suggested that there should be something in place to identify boreholes in blasting patterns.

LR indicated that a procedure has been put in place where by all shots have the bore hole plan overlain to identify any potential problems.

TDJ asked if the overpressure exceedences could have caused the problems in the Church.

PB explained that overpressure will crack glass first.

TDJ identified that there had been no new cracks occurring in the windows.

JM inquired as to why he can hear two way chatter coming from Ashton sometimes.

AS and LR indicated that the water carts have external two ways that are used when they are out of the cab refilling the truck. This is in case an emergency occurs and they are needed immediately.

LR described the number and nature of complaints received by Ashton.

FH asked if the overpressure and noise complaints were separated.

LR indicated that overpressure complaints are identified under blasting complaints.

DO asked if the tree seed used is the fast growing hybrid species.

LR indicated that hybrid tube stock species have been planted as tree screens however the tree seed used are native species found locally.

DO also asked if the OGM product is dangerous towards fauna species.

LR described that the OGM is EPA approved and Australian Standard certified.

DO asked if water tanks in Camberwell had been tested as a number of schools water tanks have been declared contaminated.

FH explained that those issues were related to lead based paint and lead fixtures on roofs rather than dust impacts.

DO asked about the water quality in Glennies Creek and is it sampled to determine if it is safe for people to use, and swim in.

LR Ashton do not analyse Glennies Creek with regard to contact and drinking water quality. It would not be recommended that people drink the water from Glennies Creek untreated as the micro organism levels would defiantly be above the National Health and Medical Research Council Guidelines for drinking water.

SR Supported this Statement

DO asked to council about them testing the water similar to what they do for other areas along the Hunter River and publish in the local paper. DO had specific concern about the kids swimming in the creek.

SR indicated that it would not be practical for council to test any further sites and would be of little benefit. The analysis that they do on the Hunter is only a guide to the health of the river, they should not be used as a swimming or drinking guide. A long time has passed between when the samples were taken and when they are published in the paper. Hence results are not the actual water quality in the river at the time they appear in the paper. SR was not sure if state water do further analysis for Glennies.

LR Indicated that the next newsletter will contain information on drinking water quality, tank water and creek water.

LR indicated that we have completed water testing and that no unusual results were found in tanks in Camberwell.

### **6.3 SECTION 94 – LIST OF PRIORITISED WORKS**

PB indicated that Ashton had received approval to use the money from the section 94 contributions on St Clements Church.

JM was unhappy with this response and indicated that the Church had refused the money to be spent on the original project and that Camberwell would not receive benefit from the contribution.

LR noted that any projects to be undertaken on the church would have to be to the exterior so that the community and visitors to the church and cemetery could benefit not just the congregation.

A number of options to spend the money were suggested by LR and SR including fencing of the Church, signage on the way into Camberwell, exterior church upgrades and a park in Camberwell. It was decided that LR would organize the CCC members to visit council and design a sign that would meet council approvals to be built on the southern entrance to Camberwell.

SR indicated that we need to speak to Gary Woodward.

### **6.4 ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

Dust from underground operations is a result of stone dusting which is undertaken to reduce the fire hazard underground.

PB indicated that lighting problems have been rectified with no issues occurring since the last meeting.

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## 7. GENERAL BUSINESS

JM indicated his disappointment in the state of Camberwell, in particular the rental properties owned by Ashton. He indicated that since a number of the houses have been bought out the place has deteriorated.

PB indicated that Ashton will look into the maintenance of properties.

PA asked where the joint acquisition plan was up to as it was identified in the DOP audit of 2005.

PB described the requirement under the Development Consent (DC) to approach other sites in the area and produce a Joint Acquisition Management Plan (JAMP). When Ashton approached these companies they were not interested as there was no requirement in their own DC to undertake a JAMP. Ashton reported this back to the Department of Planning.

PB indicated that doors would be put on to the walls of the Breaker Station to fully seal.

## 8. MINE CLOSURE PLAN

LR described the plan for mine closure which will be created in the coming months. While mine closure is a long way out at the end of the underground operations, Mine Closure planning is a requirement of the Department of Primary Industries. Ashton are currently reviewing the Mine Operations Plan and the Mine Closure Plan is included as an Appendix to this document. Consultation with relevant stakeholders is a requirement for the development of the Mine Closure Plan.

The members of the CCC stated that they would like to see the land returned to what it was before mining started which was forest and grazing land.

FH believed that it would be worthwhile making a presentation to council regarding mine closure. PB agreed.

DO inquired if Ashton would complete a grazing trial to see if the land can be used viably as grazing land.

LR indicated that Ashton would take the suggestion on board.

### **Documents provided:**

Quarter 3 Dust Report – CCC

Ashton Coal Operations Longwall DVD – CCC and SSC

## 8. DATE FOR NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 11 December 2007.

## 9. SITE INSPECTION OF THE OPERATIONS

No site inspection was undertaken.

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MEETING CLOSED AT 4.00PM

**ACTION ITEMS**

ITEM	RESPONSIBILITY
Contact Gary Woodward at SSC regarding the signage of Camberwell and liaise with SSC and CCC members to create a design for the Camberwell Sign	LR