

Austar Coal Mine Community Consultative Committee Meeting Minutes



Location: Board Room, Austar Coal Mine Main Office

Time: 4:00pm

Date: 26 April 2007

Name	Representative
Margaret MacDonald-Hill Councillor Jeff Maybury Paul McGreevy Harry Snaith Roger Lewis Keren Halliday Anna Walsh	Independent Chair Cessnock City Council Representative Community Representative Community Representative Community Representative Austar Coal Mine Austar Coal Mine
Apologies	
Louise Dews Matthew Fellowes	Community Representative Austar Coal Mine
Copy of minutes	
Councillor John Clarence	Mayor of Cessnock City Council
Mr Joel Fitzgibbon MP	Federal Member for Hunter and Shadow Defence Minister
The Hon Kerry Hickey	State Member for Cessnock
Mr Colin Phillips	NSW Department of Planning

Item	Issue	Action	Date
1	Declaration of Interests		
	MMH stated that she had been appointed as the Independent Chair of the Austar Coal Mine CCC. The appointment was approved by the Department of Planning.	N/A	
2	Introductions		
	<i>Roger Lewis</i> was introduced and welcomed as an additional community representative on the CCC. His appointment was recently confirmed by the Department of Planning. Roger has been a resident of Ellalong for 9yrs. Manager of Hunter Resource Recovery which is company involved in recycling and waste management in the Hunter. He has extensive interest and involvement in local environmental activities (inc. President of local Tidy Town and Ellalong Wetlands) and is also a long time member of the Rural Fire Brigade.	N/A	

	<p><i>Anna Walsh was introduced as Matthew Fellowes delegate</i> – Anna is a Mining Engineer and has been employed at Austar Coal Mine for 15 months. Reports to Matthew Fellowes and was present in his absence to answer mining operation related queries.</p> <p>Other CCC members also gave a brief introduction recapping the introductions from the 1st meeting.</p>		
3	Confirmation of Previous Minutes		
	<p>HS – requested that an alteration be made to previous minutes. The minutes state that he requested to see individual agreements between Austar and landowners. HS explained that he did not want to see actual agreements but rather to be informed of the environmental issues/problems that may affect individual properties (eg. potential for creek bed cracking, water pollution etc.).</p> <p>The minutes were ratified as amended. Moved by HS and seconded by JM.</p>	Minutes to be amended to reflect	
4	Business from previous minutes		
	There was no business arising from previous minutes.		
5	Correspondence		
	<p><i>Subsidence Management Plan Stage 2</i></p> <p>MMH noted that a copy of the Subsidence Management Plan for Stage 2 had been distributed to all members following the previous CCC meeting.</p> <p>HS noted that the time for comments closed on 26th of March and felt that it was insufficient due to the amount of information and was concerned the deadline has passed.</p> <p>MMH explained that an inter-agency committee considers submissions made in relation to SMP applications. MMH suggested that if someone would like to make a submission they could inform Michael Lloyd (DPI).</p> <p>HS raised concerns that the SMP was only advertised in two newspapers (The Land and The Advertiser). He felt that this was insufficient and not all residents read those publications.</p>	N/A	

	<p>HS commented that most residents in Stage 2 want to express their strong opposition to mining and asked him to convey their objections to the CCC.</p>		
	<p><i>Letter from Quorrobolong Community Council signed by Mr Harvey</i></p> <p>MMH tabled a document from the Quorrobolong Community Council because it specifically mentioned the Community Consultative Committee (CCC). The document was emailed to DPI and Austar. It states that the CCC has only met for 2 hours and that they have not been given a chance to comment on the SMP. MMH noted that the role of the CCC is to provide an avenue for the exchange of information between the community and the mine. It is not the role of the CCC not to make submissions or objections regarding the SMP. However, individuals could make a submission or comment on the SMP. MMH also mentioned that the CCC does not have any statutory powers and is purely advisory.</p> <p>KH mentioned that the letter claims that the CCC is not communicating with the community. KH suggested that it is not the CCC's responsibility to consult the community about the SMP.</p> <p>HS believed the concern is actually that the Mine is not communicating with the residents.</p> <p>RL pointed out that the copy of the letter provided had pages numbered 2 of 4 & 3 of 4 and asked whether there was a page 1 or 4. MMH showed the original email that was sent and explained that page 1 was the email heading and that there was no page 4 – it was just the printing format. KH noted that an original signed copy had also been hand delivered to the mine.</p> <p>KH noted that Austar will formally reply to the document and a copy of the response will be tabled at the next CCC meeting for information.</p>	<p>KH to table response</p>	<p>Next CCC meeting</p>

	<p><i>Letter from Christine Warren-Davey</i></p> <p>JM tabled a letter which was forwarded to Council from Christine Warren-Davey which claims that Austar's activities have been causing their home and workshop to shake. KH advised that she had not seen the letter (possibly due to MF's leave) but noted that she would follow up and Austar would respond to the Mayor. (Copies were distributed to all attendees)</p> <p>General discussion followed regarding past vibration issues relating to Singleton Army Base and military manoeuvres (HS and RL noted that they have both been affected by that in the past from military activities).</p>	<p>KH to follow up and table response</p>	<p>Next CCC meeting</p>
	<p><i>Austar Media Release – Port Restrictions</i></p> <p>KH tabled Austar's press release which explains the issues behind the recent announcement of job losses at the mine due to lack of capacity at the Port of Newcastle.</p> <p>PM asked what effect if any the reduction in production would have on the timetable for submissions and if there would be more time available for consultation.</p> <p>KH and AW believed that it would not significantly change the time available for consultation or submission dates but would discuss with MF.</p> <p>PM enquired whether the lower production rate would enable more time to collect subsidence data from LW A1 and A2 for use in Stage 2 predictions. AW and KH explained that mining in panel A1 and A2 would be slower than originally planned to meet the reduced production rate. As a result the generation of subsidence and collection of data will be proportionally slower.</p>		

6	Presentation		
	<p>KH gave presentation on Environmental Management Plans</p> <p><i>Discussion during presentation</i></p> <p>RL enquired as to what information Austar record about complaints and commented that if details are kept as to when and where the problem is it would be easier to identify what the source is.</p> <p>KH responded that complaints (written or verbal) and enquiries are directed to her and logged. A 24 hour telephone (1800) Complaints Line is in operation that records enquiries and complaints and complaints directed to the general switch number are also recorded. Each complaint is investigated to determine if there are any activities at the mine that could explain it.</p> <p>PM asked if they could see the complaints log to understand the kind of issues being raised and also the manner in which they are recorded.</p> <p>KH advised that she would show a copy of the complaints log (excluding names and contact details for privacy reasons) at the next meeting. MMH suggested that it could be done on a six monthly basis.</p> <p>PM asked if there was an external organisation or complaints line that reviews the complaints independently. KH explained that Austar is required to submit an annual return as under the conditions of the Licence. This includes details of complaints made by the community.</p> <p>In addition, the Pollution Line (run by the EPA/DEC) is available to the public to complain or enquire about any environmental concerns. Any complaints about Austar on the Pollution Line are forwarded to Austar including details of the date, time and type of complaint. Austar has is required to investigate and respond formally.</p> <p>PM asked that the EPA complaints be included in the complaints log. KH advised that they already were.</p>	<p>KH to show CCC copy of log</p>	<p>Bi-annually</p>

	<p>RL asked whether the proposed expansion of residential lots in Bellbird would impact on the mine – whether it would create an increase in the number of residents impacted by the mine.</p> <p>KH was unsure of the exact location of the proposed extension and therefore was not sure of the potential impact.</p> <p>JM believed it was more to the East of Bellbird and therefore far enough away from the Washery to be an issue.</p>	N/A	
	<p>KH noted that she would show a more detailed aerial photo of the washery area at the next meeting so everyone could see the locations of the monitoring points and discharge points etc.</p>	KH to arrange close up aerial of Washery	Next CCC meeting
	<p>Discussed how the mine understands the water balance between old workings, underground process water, washery water etc. Pressure readings taken underground to indicate how much water is in old workings, shaft dipping from the surface to note changes in water levels, pumping records etc.</p>	N/A	
	<p>KH advised that the Site Water Management Plan has not been submitted to the Department. However, in addition to monitoring required under the Licence the draft SWMP includes surface water monitoring in Quorrobolong and Bellbird Creek. RL asked about the water monitoring regime for Quorrobolong Creek. KH noted that Austar recently commenced water quality sampling in Quorrobolong creek at 2 locations. The sampling points include the eastern boundary of the site where the creek enters Austar land and the south western boundary where it exists Austar owned land.</p> <p>PM asked about whether there is a plan to do volumetric flow monitoring as a way to ensure water is not being lost due to surface subsidence. PM noted there had been some discussions regarding this issue.</p> <p>KH advised that it is difficult to accurately monitor flow in a stream without a weir or fixed cross section to determine flow rate and discharge.</p>		

	<p>JM mentioned that in other areas such as the Hawkesbury Nepean weirs were no longer allowed due to interference with fish. No one was sure what the current position is or what methods are being implemented in other areas.</p> <p>KH advised that she was not aware of the content of earlier discussions about stream flow monitoring will discuss with MF on his return and report back to the CCC.</p>	KH to follow up MF	Next CCC meeting
	JM asked if we were still using the dam on the old Bellbird Mine site. KH and AW were not sure and KH advised that she would report back.	KH to follow up	Next CCC meeting
	<p>RL suggested the CCC visit the washery and other surface areas to better understand the site.</p> <p>KH and MMH suggested that the site visit be organised for the meeting after the next one (due to lack of daylight during winter).</p>	KH to arrange site inspection	Meeting No 4
	<p>HS asked how noise from the main fans at the new pit top might be able to be minimised by positioning.</p> <p>KH advised that the new pit top facility would be designed to take into account local conditions (topography, ecology etc) to minimise the impacts. AK and KH were unable to comment on the design details of the fan but suggested that MF would be able to address further at a later meeting.</p>	N/A	
	<p>HS enquired about the origin of the 35dBA criteria.</p> <p>KH said that the criteria was specified in the Notice of Modification and had been set by EPA (DEC). KH advised that she would provide information on the relevant standards to the next meeting</p>	KH to provide details about standards	Next CCC Meeting
	<p>HS asked about dust monitoring and what Austar plans to do if we find any hazardous particles in the monitoring. Also how did we pick our dust monitoring sites and was there any external input.</p> <p>KH explained that an external consultant was engaged to develop the air quality monitoring plan. The plan was submitted to the Department of Planning for review and approval. The location of</p>		

	<p>air quality monitoring locations are influenced by a range of factors including location and types of surface activities, predominant wind direction, location of residential receptors, proximity to power, access and agreement with land owners to allow installation of equipment</p> <p>RL asked where dust gauge monitoring Pt 4 is located. KH advised that it had been installed in Ellalong on Hunter St and will provide details of exact location at next meeting.</p>	KH to provide map showing location of DG 4	Next CCC Meeting
7	General Business		
	<p>HS would like to discuss the safety level crossings at some stage. KH indicated that a draft safety audit of 4 crossings has been prepared and is to be discussed with the RTA in the near future. Once finalised and agreed with the RTA the outcomes could be discussed with the CCC.</p>		
	<p>MMH suggested that Greg Cole-Clarke be invited to the next meeting to discuss the Mine Subsidence Board and its role.</p> <p>PM asked if someone from the EPA or a similar department (DEC) could also come to discuss issues of natural environment not under the jurisdiction of the Mine Subsidence Board.</p> <p>MMH and KH will talk to their contacts and invite an appropriate person to attend a future CCC meeting</p>	MMH and KH to arrange guest speakers for meetings	
	Meeting closed 6.45pm		

NEXT MEETING: 26 JULY 2007

Time: 4:00pm – 6:00pm

Location: Board Room, Austar Coal Mine Main Office

Recorded: A Walsh 26 April, 2007

Confirmed:

Chairperson – Austar Coal Mine Community Consultative Committee