



Austar Coal Mine Community Consultative Committee Meeting Minutes

Location: Board Room, Austar Coal Mine Main Office

Time: 4:00pm

Date: 12 June 2008

Name	Representative
Margaret MacDonald-Hill (MMH)	Independent Chair
Councillor Jeff Maybury (JM)	Cessnock City Council Representative
Louise Dews (LD)	Community Representative
Paul McGreevy (PM)	Community Representative
Hon Garry West (GW)	Independent Chair (elect)
Peter Jamieson (PJ)	Umwelt
Catherine Pepper (CP)	Umwelt
Greig Duncan (GD)	Austar Coal Mine
Frank Fulham (FF)	Austar Coal Mine
Sarah Harvey (SH)	Austar Coal Mine
Apologies	
Rodger Lewis (RL)	Community Representative
Harry Snaith (HS)	Community Representative
Alison Dunne (AD)	Quorrobolong Resident (Special Invitation)
Copy of minutes	
Councillor John Clarence	Mayor of Cessnock City Council
Mr Joel Fitzgibbon MP	Federal Member for Hunter and Defence Minister
The Hon Kerry Hickey	State Member for Cessnock
Mr Colin Phillips	NSW Department of Planning

Item	Issue	Action	Date
1	Welcome and Declaration of Interests		
	<p>MMH Welcomed GW, FF and SH to the CCC.</p> <p>MMH stated that she had been appointed as the Independent Chair of the Austar Coal Mine CCC and that she is a member of the Mine Subsidence Board and also the Ministers Arbitration Panel.</p> <p>MMH stated that due to these potential conflicts of interest, she had resigned as Independent Chair. MMH then informed the CCC that GW would be the new Independent</p>		

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	<p>Chair.</p> <p>JM stated that he is a member of the Mine Subsidence Board.</p>		
2	Confirmation of Previous Minutes		
	<p>The minutes were ratified. Moved by LD and seconded by JM.</p>		
3	Business Arising		
	<p>LD asked where the pipeline that passes under Wollombi Rd goes to.</p> <p>GD stated that it goes to the old underground workings.</p> <p>LD asked how Austar monitors levels in the old workings.</p> <p>GD stated that boreholes are generally monitored on a monthly basis, with some being monitored more frequently. Sites include Elrington, Hebburn, Central, No. 2 Shaft and Kalingo.</p> <p>A discussion then ensued between LD, GD and PJ regarding what happens if levels are shown to be rising, what capacity the old workings had, what would happen in severe rainfall events and where the water from the old workings goes in relation to Congewai Creek. It was explained that the water levels are constantly fluctuating and that they are at approximately 75% capacity. The current workings are down dip of the old ones, which means that the water flows into the current workings. The current workings are dewatered from No. 2 shaft. The water is then pumped to the CHPP where it is treated and used for things such as dust suppression. Some of the water is sent back underground and some is discharged in accordance with Austar's Environmental Protection Licence. Congewai Creek is too far away to be affected by this water and the workings are a significant distance below any creeks.</p> <p>PM asked what would happen to the water when the mine ceases operations.</p> <p>PJ explained that the mining operation is constantly creating a larger void, which will fill</p>		

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	<p>over a long period of time. Inflow from sinkholes is also adding to the water levels in the old workings.</p> <p>PM asked whether it was in Austar's interest to fix sink holes.</p> <p>SH, PJ and GD stated that on land that Austar is responsible for, they continually fill and repair sinkholes that open up. Some holes are weaker than others and continue to open up, so Austar continues to fix them.</p>		
	<p>MMH referred to a phone call she had earlier with AD. SH and LD has also had the same phone call, in which AD stated that she wished to be invited to the next meeting as she was unable to attend this one. MMH had informed AD that she would be invited to the next meeting by the new Independent Chair.</p>	<p>GW to invite AD to the next meeting.</p>	
	<p>It was noted that the presentation on water monitoring requested by PM at the last meeting was an agenda item to this meeting to be delivered by PJ..</p>		

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4	Correspondence		
	One letter out dated 5 June 2008 inviting AD to the current CCC meeting.		
5	Presentation on water monitoring in creeks– Peter Jamieson		
	<p>PJ described potential groundwater drainage mechanisms associated with longwall mining. Analysis and monitoring has indicated that fracture heights above the longwall goafs will be less than 220 metres and hence will not extend to the surface which is in excess of 400 metres above the goaf. As a result draining of surface or shallow groundwater to the goaf is not predicted to occur. Fracture heights will continue to be assessed during mining. In addition there is an aquifer at about 70 metres below the surface that is monitored. If fracturing extended to this aquifer it would drain. Groundwater levels in this aquifer will continue to be monitored to check that fracture heights do not extend to this level.</p> <p>Apart from the fracture height above the goaf, valley closure as a result of longwall mining can also result in groundwater drainage as has occurred at the Cataract River. PJ gave a simplified overview of what was occurring with longwall mining under the Cataract/Nepean River systems and how valley closure as a result of the steep sided cliffs and valleys adjacent to the Cataract River had resulted in cracking under the bed of the river with this cracking extending to the Nepean River as a result of longwalls being mined sequentially from the Cataract River to the Nepean River. This situation is very different to longwall mining under the Quorrobolong Creek system which has a much broader shallower valley compared to the Cataract River. As a result valley closure in the Quorrobolong valley following longwall mining is predicted to have significantly less fracturing that will result in smaller more dissipated subsurface cracking with the cracking distributed across the extent of the valley rather than concentrated under the creek system. In addition longwall mining</p>		

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	<p>will not be continuous under the length of the Quorrobolong Creek system.</p> <p>PM asked if there are trigger levels/thresholds to indicate problems.</p> <p>PJ stated that groundwater levels fluctuate over time in response to rainfall and other climatic conditions and that these natural fluctuations need to be taken into consideration. To address this, a series of monitoring bores in the shallow Quorrobolong Creek alluvium will be established and monitored pre and post mining with the relative levels in these bores analysed to check that no localised changes in groundwater level occur. Trigger levels that will enable us to determine between natural levels of groundwater fluctuation and mining induced will be developed as part of the groundwater monitoring program for Stage 2 and Stage 3.</p> <p>LD asked what the response would be if all water levels dropped.</p> <p>PJ stated that monitoring would continue and that works would be carried out to stop any cracking in creek beds.</p>	<p>PJ to prepare data/trigger levels for next meeting.</p>	

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6	Operations Update – Sarah Harvey		
	<p>Continuous Improvement Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austar is committed to a program of continuous improvement across its entire operations in consultation with the relevant government agencies • Program includes the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Water management – Noise from Pelton Coal Handling and Preparation Plant (CHPP) – Rehabilitation activities – Community Consultation <p>Water Management and Noise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austar has been undertaking further upgrades to its existing water treatment system at Pelton CHPP to achieve better water quality outcomes • Update to Austar’s Site Water Management Plan currently being prepared for sign-off by DoP and DECC • A noise study has commenced in consultation with DECC to investigate noise impacts on residents in Mount View with a view to implementing further noise reduction measures at Pelton CHPP <p>Mining Operations and Rehabilitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austar recently completed a new Mining Operations Plan (MOP) covering all Austar operations over the next 7 years in accordance with DPI requirements • Rehabilitation of Austar land at Bellbird and Kalingo will be commencing in the next few months • A community newsletter will be sent out during June asking that people keep away from the reject emplacement areas and rehabilitation areas south of Wollombi Road at Bellbird due to safety concerns and increased heavy vehicle movements in the area <p>Community Consultation</p>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented a CCC in early 2007 • Newsletters for community in the Pelton CHPP area and the underground mining area will be provided approximately monthly (initially) to give information and updates to the community regarding Austar's operations • Austar's website currently being reviewed and now includes the minutes from all CCC meetings • CCC meeting minutes are now also provided regularly to Cessnock City Library <p>Stage 2 Modification of Consent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft conditions of consent have been discussed with DoP • Modification signed off by Minister late last week • Subsidence Management Plan application for longwall mining to be submitted during June 2008 • Property Subsidence Management Plans to be completed for all properties in the subsidence affectation area with submission prioritised for LWA3 first, followed by LWA4 and LWA5 <p>Project Application and Preliminary EA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary Environmental Assessment and Major Project Application was lodged in June 2007 • Information pack sent to all landholders in the subsidence affected area at that time • Community consultation during the end of 2007 • Preliminary EA and Major Project Application to be re-submitted in June 2008 • Notification to appear in local papers during June 2008 <p>Draft Environmental Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All specialist studies completed to draft stage 		
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Environmental Assessment being completed by Umwelt at present • Full draft likely to be available at the end of June 2008 • Second round of community consultation to occur prior to lodgement of draft Environmental Assessment • Expect to lodge draft Environmental Assessment with DoP in early July 2008. <p>PM asked for CCC to have a surface tour in the future.</p>	<p>SH to arrange surface tour. Will occur before the next meeting.</p>	
7	General Business		
	<p>Sarah Harvey asked the CCC the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would you like to see included in future meetings? • What would you like to see excluded from future meetings? <p>GD has resigned and FF will fill the position of General Manager.</p> <p>SH has commenced her role as Environmental Coordinator.</p> <p>MMH stated that AD was invited to the meeting, but as she was unable to attend, she had asked that the following four matters be raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Siltation devices at drill rigs • Updates to website • CCC Meeting Minutes on website • Invitation to the next meeting <p>SH explained that she had previously spoken with AD regarding the first and third matters and that she had also received a phone message that afternoon being asked to raise the four matters at the meeting. SH stated that she had conducted an inspection of the drill site and that she had found the erosion and sediment controls to be sufficient, but that they could be improved upon. SH had also spoken to the contractor responsible for their installation and had provided them with a standard from the Landcom Soils and</p>		

	<p>Construction Guideline that would be implemented at future sites.</p> <p>SH acknowledges that the website did require some updates to reflect changes in personnel and approvals status and that this matter would be rectified in the near future.</p> <p>SH stated that the CCC Minutes were on the website and had been for approximately 1-2 weeks and would continue to be updated. They can be found by following the Community and Community Consultative Committee links: http://www.austarcoalmine.com.au/community_consultative_committee.htm</p> <p>MMH confirmed that SH had shown her how to access the minutes on the website prior to the meeting.</p> <p>SH also stated that she had sent hard copies of previous minutes to the Cessnock City Library and would continue to do so.</p> <p>MMH and GW confirmed that AD would be invited to the next meeting.</p> <p>LD requested a plan that displayed the location of longwall panels and property boundaries.</p>		
		SH to provide LD with requested plan.	
8	Next Meeting		
	Next meeting tentatively scheduled for Thursday 9 October 2008 at 2.30 pm (for site visit – official meeting to follow)		
	Meeting closed 6:00pm		

Recorded: S. Harvey 12 June 2008

Confirmed: Thursday 9 October 2008

Moved – JM, Seconded – LD

Chairperson – Austar Coal Mine Community Consultative Committee