

Narrabri Mine Community Consultative Committee Meeting #64

Date: Wednesday 13th March 2024

Time: 5:15pm

Location: Narrabri Coal Operations Boardroom

Meeting Commenced at 5:15pm

Present: Russell Stewart (RS)
Ian Duffy (ID)
James Stieger (JS)
Peter Webb (PW)
Bruce Danson (BD)
Geoff Hunter (GH)
Cathy Redding (CR)
Geoff Hunter (GH)
David Ellwood (DE) – Whitehaven Coal
Ben Simpson (BS) – Whitehaven Coal
Harriet Davies (HD) – Whitehaven Coal
Brent Baker (BB) – Whitehaven Coal
Gerald Linde (GL) – Whitehaven Coal

Apologies:

Alan Grumley (AG)
Darren Swain (DS) – Whitehaven Coal
Jabin De Keizer (JDK) Whitehaven Coal

Moved: RS Seconded: PW

1. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

No declarations.

Moved: RS Seconded: PW JS

2. PREVIOUS MINUTES

RS asked if everyone had read previous minutes.

RS asked for previous minutes to be accepted as a true and accurate record. Everyone present at the meeting agreed that the minutes were true and accurate.

Moved: RS Seconded: GH and CS

2.1 BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

MEETING ACTIONS		
Person	Action	Due
BB	Add noise monitoring for the Bow Hills property to the 2023 Annual Review	Completed. Included in 2023 Annual Review
DE	Obtain number of new apprentice spaces.	Completed
HD	Include new GW monitoring bores and graphs in the next CCC meeting	Completed
DS	Investigate land management on properties, feral animals, fencing	Completed. Detail provided in presentation

- JS asked about NCO's feral animal baiting program due to increased pig sightings. HD confirmed two baiting programs by NCO in late 2023 and January 2024, with plans for ongoing baiting. DE mentioned trials of aerial shooting on offset properties but noted challenges due to dense vegetation. Aerial shooting isn't viable on the mine lease due to safety regulations.

Moved: RS Seconded: PW

3. OPERATIONS PROGRESS REPORT AND SAFETY UPDATE

Presented by GL

- GL presented the production figures to date. Production is reduced due to challenges the LW has faced with unfavourable geological conditions; stone intrusions and washouts within the LW panel.
- 103 First Aid (scratches, bumps etc) 6 medical treatments, 2 restricted work due to an injury at work 1 lost time injury FY24 to date.
- There have been successful results with labour hire throughout the company. Recruitment continues with 25/30 vacancies open across the business. Slower production has resulted in reallocation of tasks underground so night hire recruitment has been paused and rotas and employees reallocated work within the underground operation.
- JS asked how long until the LW passes the fault and production increases. GL gave an explanation of the geological formations, the stone intrusion and the washouts concluding that they will be present throughout the LW203 panel.

- The Brine Dam has been completed and commissioned with continuing testing.
- Ventilation shaft drilling has commenced on southern mine lease boundary, located above LW205.

4. STAGE 3 UPDATE

Presented by DE

- DE updated on the progress of the stage 3 project.
- There has not been much change with the PA as per the last CCC meeting. The court case was finalised in September however, a second appeal from the Environmental Justice Australia (EJA) was lodged. The new court case was in February 2024. Following the court case, the project goes back to the Minister for approval and signature.
- The construction of the ventilation shaft sinking has commenced. ASD are the contracting company constructing the shaft, the same company who constructed the first shaft. The shaft goes from the surface to the underground, and should take roughly one year to complete. The shaft sits above LW205. DE explained the basics to how the shaft is developed.
- DE mentioned that make-good agreements are still in progress, with six out of nine signed and a verbal agreement in place with the seventh pending paperwork. One landholder requested additional investigation on a bore. GH asked about next steps if agreements aren't signed. DE explained that NCO must make best endeavours to reach agreement with affected landholder, if an agreement cannot be reached then either party can refer the issue to the planning secretary.
- GH expressed community concerns about trust in NCO's independent testing for GW bore investigations. GH asked if there is scope for NCO to fund landholders to test their bores independently. DE discussed process of building the groundwater model for the purpose of undertaking the groundwater assessment, and this is why a single consulting company is preferred. GL stated that NCO have followed the environmental assessment process required by government. DE advised GH that NCO would be willing to speak with any concerned landholders regarding bores that may be potentially impacted. GL assured that NCO's contractors were selected impartially and are selected on their professionalism to ensure no bias is involved.
- BD affirmed the existence of baseline bore data for each installation. DE clarified that the government's bore registration system provides much of this data, but many unregistered bores lack baseline information, prompting the field surveys and landholder engagement.
- PW proposed landholders accompany groundwater experts during data collection from their bore. There was general agreement that this is a good recommendation, and DE stressed NCO's active encouragement of such participation.

5. UPDATE ON APPROVALS

Presented by BB.

- EPA: EPL12789 License Variation approved (05/02/24) to include wet weather discharge point for western shaft sediment dam.
- Resources Regulator: Exploration License 6243- Activity Approval granted (02/02/24) for exploration work program. NCO are delaying the Exploration License 9455 & 9456 program due to budget restraints.

- NRAR (Natural Resources Access Regulator). Conducting audit on NCO compliance with non-urban water metering rules. They are visiting NCO in April 2024 for a site visit.
- DPE- NCO received a warning Letter issued 17/01/24 due to a failure to implement Energy Savings Action Plan. The Greenhouse Gas Minimisation plan was reviewed and approved 21/12/23 which also includes the Energy Savings Action Plan.
- Groundwater Impact Assessment- approval granted to assign additional 650 shares in Gunnedah-Oxley Basin MDB Groundwater source to account for indirect take as a result of mining. This brings total assigned shares to 1,871 ML/year.
- GH inquired about NCO's Greenhouse Gas Minimization plan and their efforts to reduce emissions. DE mentioned ongoing trials, such as using mine-produced gas for algae growth, which proved successful. There are plans for potential flaring of pre-drainage gas and sealing old underground workings to minimize gas leakage.

Bush Fire Concern

- GH and local landholders expressed concerns about perceived lack of support from WHC during the December 2023 bushfires. They felt they didn't receive the assistance they requested from WHC.
- In response to this concern, GL emphasised that the request to NCO was, "Do you have firefighters" to which NCO response was "No". GL emphasised that NCO staff are to be kept safe. Narrabri Mine enlisted trained firefighters through a contracting company for asset protection at Narrabri Mine, but regulations limit employees involvement due to restrictions and legislation.
- GH highlighted concern about WHC's significant landholding in the area, leading to labour shortages during events like this. GH advocated for improved management of WHC properties before catastrophes to ensure better preparedness for all involved.
- CR expressed admiration for the decision that GL and NCO for the decision to not engage employees for firefighting purposes due to safety concerns.
- DE firefighting is unsafe for untrained people.
- JS suggested controlled back burning and other management methods with the large amounts of land that WHC have within the area.
- GL: NCO and Forestry NSW have been planning for several years for a coordinated hazard reduction burn along the boundary of Mine Lease and Jacks Creek State Forest. However unfavourable weather and forest conditions delayed the planned burn; this is ultimately Forestry NSW decision.
- BB advised CCC that WHC representatives attended daily Local Emergency Committee briefings. Narrabri Mine offered assistance in the form of water supply from site dams to be made available for resupply of helicopter water bombers, and provision of graders to improve Scratch Road firebreak.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING REPORT

Presented by BS. All CCC members receive a hard copy of the environmental monitoring report.

- ENVIRONMENTAL INCIDENTS: BS
 - No reportable incidents to regulatory agencies since previous CCC meeting.

- COMPLAINTS:
 - 1 complaint to the local land services
- DEPOSITIONAL DUST:
 - 2023 annual average (year to date) for all monitoring locations are below the licence limit.
 - Analysis of February 2024 results have not been finalised by the laboratory. March 2024 samples are due to be collected 14.03.2024.
- PM10 AIR QUALITY:
 - No exceedances of the 24-hour limit within last 12-month period at both Turrabaa and Claremont monitoring.
 - Rolling 12-month average currently below annual average limit for the two monitoring locations (Claremont and Turrabaa).
- QUARTERLY NOISE MONITORING
 - Q1 2023 - monitoring 11th – 14th March. The report will follow - EPA to receive this data within 30 days of obtaining the sampling results.
- SURFACE WATER MONITORING: No discharge events since the previous CCC meeting.
- WATER LICENSING
 - Presented graphs showing NCO water licence allocation usage.
 - Levels below licenced allocations.
- GROUNDWATER MONITORING –
 - The new groundwater bores were sampled in December 2023 / January 2024. Access was prohibited to the Pilliga in December 2023 due to bushfires.
 - Presented Hydrographs for groundwater monitoring locations.
 - AGE and recalibration of the GW model and review underway.
- SUBSIDENCE MONITORING
 - Lidar data was taken in December 2023. A suitably qualified professional is reviewing the data against subsidence predications, due in March 2024.
 - All monitoring results fell within modelled predictions.
- REHABILITATION

- 7.1 hectares from beginning of year (2024) to date.
- GH asked why the NCO are using a lot less licensed water. GL explained that lower production resulted in less water demand, in addition the efficiency of water treatment plant on-site results in more water reclaimed from underground dewatering.
- GH asked about the recalibration of P16. BB advised this is addressed in the 2023 Annual Review. GH requested copy of report to review prior to next CCC meeting.
- No further questions/comments from members.

7. GENERAL BUSINESS

- RS asked who assists with the bore water for Baan Baa and if NCO was involved. CR was it NCO? CR confirmed that this is Narrabri Shire Council (NSC) and that said person should contact NSC directly for assistance.
- No other general business

8. COMMUNITY

Darren Swain and Jabin de Keizer expressed their apologies as they unable to attend Q1 CCC meeting.
No more business

Meeting Closed at 18:18

MEETING ACTIONS		
Person	Action	Due
BB	GW Model recalibration report and Annual Review to be issued two weeks prior to next meeting for members to review.	05/06/2024
BB	Update on the Solar Farm Progress	Q2 CCC Meeting

NEXT MEETING

19th June 2024, 5:15pm in the Boardroom, NCO