

# ***Werris Creek Coal Mine Community Consultative Committee***

## **Twentieth Meeting of the Committee**

### **Whitehaven Coal Training Room, Werris Creek Coal Mine**

**10.00am Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2011**

## **MINUTES**

### **1. Record of Attendance:**

Present: Jill Coleman (Community Representative - Chair); Noel Taylor (Community Representative); Lindsay Bridge (Community Representative); Des George (Werris Creek Coal - WCC); Robert George (Production Superintendent - WCC); Andrew Wright (Environmental Officer WCC and Minute Taker); Arief Martono (Orica); Murali Nagarajan (Orica); Anthony Green (Orica) and John Constable (Orica).

Apologies: Col Stewart (Liverpool Plains Shire Council); Ron Van Katwyk (Liverpool Plains Shire Council); Mick Post (Project Manager WCC).

In the absence of an appointed independent Chairperson, the Community Representatives nominated Jill Coleman as the Chairperson for today's meeting.

*Moved: Noel Taylor Seconded: Lindsay Bridge. Motion carried.*

### **2. New Matters for Discussion under General Business**

Representatives from WCC's contract blasting company, Orica have attended the meeting to discuss blasting practices and outcomes of investigations into the increase in the number of blasting complaints received during May to July 2011.

### **3. Matters Arising**

#### **a) Actions from Previous Meeting**

None.

#### **b) Other Matters Arising**

None.

### **4. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Minutes of the previous meeting 26<sup>th</sup> May 2011 were accepted as true and accurate representation of business conducted on that day.

*Moved: Jill Coleman Seconded: Noel Taylor. Motion carried.*

### **5. Declaration of Pecuniary or other interests**

None declared.

## 6. Environmental Monitoring Report May, June and July 2011

**Weather Station** – A change in the information presented with actual meteorological data included. Jill Coleman asked how to interpret the wind rose diagrams, with May and June months dominated by south easterly winds and July predominately north westerly winds. The three month period was quite dry with just over 80mm of rainfall. The average lapse rate was positive indicating that temperature inversions were common over May, June and July.

**Dust** – The daily and monthly PM10 dust results for May and July were within compliance. However June PM10 dust results averaged above  $30\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  at “Tonsley Park”, “Cintra” and “Railway View” with a number of days exceeding the PM10 24 hour limit of  $50\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ . WCC own “Cintra” and “Railway View” properties and have commenced negotiations with the owners of “Tonsley Park” due to the potential for mining impacts. All dust deposition gauge results were below the monthly amenity criteria of  $3.6\text{g}/\text{m}^2/\text{month}$ . Two dust complaints were made during the period, one on behalf of residents of the subdivision north of Quirindi regarding a perceived increase in dust overtime and the other complaint by a passing motorist regarding dust from mining operations on 20<sup>th</sup> May. No dust monitoring is undertaken from the Quirindi Subdivision given that it is 8km from WCC, however dust monitoring results from adjacent properties to the mine do not demonstrate an increase in dust overtime. An inspection at the time of the complaint did not identify the source of dust but confirmed that drills were using water sprays and water carts were active onsite.

**Noise** – There were no noise exceedances during May, June and July however a number of elevated results due to noise enhancing temperature inversions were identified by attended monitoring at “Glenara”, “Almawillee”, “Greenslopes”, “Tonsley Park” and “Kyooma”. In total there were eight noise complaints for the period. Seven complaints were regarding dozer operations at the Train Load Out area from the one resident in Werris Creek. Additional noise monitoring to date have confirmed under even temperature inversion conditions that noise levels are within compliance limits. The other noise complaint was from a Quipolly resident regarding operational noise during a strong temperature inversion.

**Blasting** – There were 21 blasts during the period. “Greenslopes” is averaging 6.7% of blasts (since April 2011) over 115dB(L) and is currently exceeding the 5% limit due to the two blasts in June. The blasts on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2011 and 16<sup>th</sup> June 2011 both recorded elevated overpressure levels above 115dB(L) at Greenslopes and Cintra but less than 115dB(L) at Werris Creek. No blast exceeded the maximum blast overpressure limit of 120dB(L) during the period. These two blasts generated 30 of the 35 blasting complaints during the period. Orica representatives discussed the investigation into both blasts which found that the wet weather during May had contaminated the stemming material as well as that not enough stemming material was used in the weathered rock, resulting in “rifling” causing the high overpressure readings. WCC and the blasting contractor have implemented corrective actions to improve practices to minimise future elevated overpressure results from “rifling” events.

**Groundwater** – All groundwater levels decreased and both the pH and electrical conductivity increased during the period due to the drier prevailing conditions (less rainfall recharge of aquifers) since the start of the year when water tables were at the highest recorded levels.

**Surface Water** – No surface water monitoring results exceeded the trigger levels of the Site Water Management Plan response plan. There were no wet weather discharge events and four controlled discharge events during the period. All discharge events were within compliance.

**Complaints** – There were 46 complaints received during the period. There were 35 complaints related to blasting; 8 complaints related to noise, two complaints related to dust and one complaint related to lighting. There were 26 different complainants during the period with 12 individual complaints originating from one complainant in Werris Creek.

Motion moved to accept the Environmental Monitoring Report May, June and July 2011.

*Moved: Jill Coleman. Seconded: Noel Taylor. Motion Carried.*

## **7. General Business**

### **a. Community Consultative Committee Status**

Andrew Wright raised that WCC had been in discussions with Department of Planning and Infrastructure over replacing both the independent Chairperson and Community Representatives vacancies. Department of Planning and Infrastructure had canvassed a potential independent Chairperson and WCC were organizing a meeting to determine their availability. To date the Department of Planning and Infrastructure have not advertised for Community Representative nominations.

### **b. WCC Life of Mine Project Environmental Assessment Update**

Department of Planning and Infrastructure have provided WCC with an opportunity to comment on the draft Project Approval for the Life of Mine Project. When the Project Approval is approved, WCC will also need to apply for a new Mining Lease, Mining Operations Plan and Environmental Protection License variation. The next advancement of mining is estimated to be in two to three months time.

### **c. "History of Coal Mining at Werris Creek" Booklet**

Andrew Wright said that all comments on the draft booklet were back with the publisher/printer and hopes by the next meeting that the final published copy will be sent to all CCC members.

### **d. Orica Review of Blasting Practices at WCC**

Orica representatives helped explain the general process of blasting at WCC with on average 300 holes with between 50 and 100 tonnes of explosives per blast and that 11,000 tonnes of explosives used per year onsite. Orica representatives outlined the two main measures implemented to minimise overpressure levels by increasing the height of stemming in weathered overburden to 4m and a change in stemming supplier. Orica representatives explained that while all blasts had been within compliance limits, blast effects were being experienced by people within Werris Creek. Another investigation by Orica into minimizing vibration impacts looked into extending the duration of the blast to 3.5 seconds but reducing the peak vibration levels experienced by people. When the final investigation reports are available, WCC will make them publically available and place a note in the "Werris Creek Flyer". WCC may look other consultation methods to help allay any community fears into blasting impacts.

Jill Coleman asked if blasting was going to get worse for Werris Creek residents as the mine moves closer to the town. Andrew Wright said that the risk of complaints from Werris Creek residents will increase for the Life of Mine Project, however WCC was confident that improvements in blasting practices and design can be made to minimise any nuisance from blasts. Noel Taylor asked about gases that can be produced by blasting and whether they can be hazardous to your health. The Orica representatives said that nitrous oxide can be produced by the incomplete combustion of explosives during blasting, commonly called fume. All blasts aim to avoid fume generation, however if certain types of explosives mix with water during rain events, they can deteriorate and this is when fume occurs. The deterioration of explosives is similar to fertilizer when it becomes wet and dissolves because they are both ammonium nitrate products. The fume can only be hazardous at high concentrations right next to the blast, however within a couple of 100m any fume readily dilutes in the atmosphere and becomes harmless. The community representatives were happy with the information that Orica had provided them and that they felt they could better explain to the broader community that blasting practices were improving.

**Meeting Closed 11:00am.**

**Next Meeting was scheduled for 24<sup>th</sup> November 2011.**

**Copy to:**

Jill Coleman  
Noel Taylor  
Lindsay Bridge

Community Representative  
Community Representative  
Community Representative

Colin Phillips  
Michael Lloyd  
Ron Van Katwyk  
Cr Col Stewart

DoP  
I&I NSW  
LPSC  
LPSC

Casper Dieben  
Brian Cullen  
Danny Young  
Mick Post  
Des George  
Andrew Wright

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