

# **Minutes of the 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Tarrawonga Coal Mine Community Consultative Committee**

**Meeting Held:** 9<sup>th</sup> February 2011 at 10:00am

**Venue:** Tarrawonga Coal Mine, Training Room

## **1. Present and Apologies**

**Present:** Clr Ken Bates (Narrabri Shire Rep), Chairman  
Mr Danny Young (Environmental Manager)  
Miss Jill Scealy (Environmental Officer)  
Mr Bob McGregor (Community Rep)  
Mr Bart Crosby (Community Rep)  
Mr Peter Laird (Community Rep)  
Clr Colleen Fuller (Gunnedah Shire Rep)  
Mr Ged Conder (Temporary Project Manager)  
Mr Tim Muldoon (Community Liaison Officer)  
Mr John Molloy (Visitor – Toll Resources)

**Apologies:** Mr Sandy Bull (Community Rep)  
Mr Jason Conomos (Project Manager)

## **2. Previous Minutes**

Minutes of the previous meeting were adopted as a true record on the motion of Peter Laird and Colleen Fuller.

## **3. Business Arising**

- 3.1.** Jill Scealy advised that the Section 75W modification Project Approval had been posted to all CCC members. Ken Bates advised that he didn't receive his copy. Jill Scealy printed a copy and issued it to Ken Bates at the meeting.
- 3.2.** Ken Bates advised that there is little to report regarding progress of the Mining Related Council's plan to appeal for re-injection of funds back into mining communities. He advised that a meeting was to be held at Parliament House later in the month and that the upcoming election would have an impact on the outcome.
- 3.3.** John Molloy advised that the need for hardstand bays has reduced as a result of the depot relocating to Vickery. Drivers are making use of Vickery, Tarrawonga and Rocglen facilities for breaks as well as existing hardstand bays. There is a possibility that one could be installed between Vickery and the Speedway but this will need to be investigated further so it was agreed that this item should be removed from the agenda at this stage.
- 3.4.** Danny Young advised that the sunken concrete on the haul route where the former ramps were located had been fixed by filling with a

bitumen seal. Bart Crosby said the Sandy Bull had mentioned that the repair was a big improvement in relation to truck noise.

- 3.5.** John Molloy indicated that any trucks travelling along the haul route outside of the approved haulage hours would be isolated incidents of breakdowns that are repaired and transported back to the depot for security reasons. He referred to the issue raised at the last meeting about two trucks travelling on Manilla Road outside of the approved hours and advised that one truck was escorting another truck with maintenance issues.

Whilst discussing haulage hours, Ken Bates noted that he had heard rumours that Toll were investigating possible 14 hour shifts. John Molloy explained that the Basic Fatigue Management (BFM) system under the RTA allows for 14 hours of driving with two ½ hour breaks. John also detailed the controls that Toll have in place to manage fatigue which include the Opti-Alert system that alerts the driver and leading hand if fatigue is identified, extensive driver training, medical assessments of drivers and the use of a satellite tracking system. John also advised that if a driver is showing signs of fatigue they are sent home. He noted a recent example where a driver had not suitably rested prior to arriving for the shift and for this reason was sent home before commencing the shift.

John detailed the proposed roster for the longer hours (which only a selected few suitable drivers would be undertaking), as listed below:

- Week 1 – long shift, short shift, long shift, short shift, long shift
- Week 2 – short shift, long shift, short shift, long shift, short shift
- Week 3 – 5 x short shifts

Long shifts are considered 14 hours while short shifts are considered 8 hours.

John committed that only suitable drivers will be allowed to drive the long shifts and drivers that live a greater distance from the depot (eg. Tamworth) will not be considered for the shifts. He said that 14 hour shifts will always be the minority. In addition to this, John mentioned that Toll is investigating the possible construction of a “bunker” at the depot for drivers who are fatigued. Any construction will require appropriate approvals.

John noted the difficulty with employing people in the region and that the longer shifts make working for Toll more financially beneficial for drivers. There was general discussion about employment issues and John suggested that Country Week should include representatives from companies such as Toll and Whitehaven. John said that they had recently advertised for drivers in the local area plus other areas such as Inverell and Mudgee and only had 3 applicants. Colleen Fuller said that the Regional Development Strategy receives both State and Federal funding and she will arrange for companies such as Toll and Whitehaven to be invited in order to put their case forward about employment issues.

Ken Bates asked if there were training facilities for people to move from single trucks to B-doubles. John Molloy indicated that approximately 15 drivers had been trained in the last twelve months and Toll had just employed an RTA approved trainer to train new drivers. They can only train for HC drivers at the moment but are undertaking the training to allow for training in MC as well.

Ken Bates highlighted the safety issues with longer shift and said they were a grave concern to the community. John Molloy admitted that monotony is one of the biggest issues with truck driving but Toll believes they have enough safeguards in place to manage it.

Bart Crosby asked if the two ½ hr breaks make the shift a 15 shift. John Molloy said that it can but they're finding that the required number of loads is being completed in less time. Bart asked about when the breaks must be taken and whether they can be taken at the start and end of the shift. John indicated that they could not be taken at the start and end of shift and are taken in accordance with RTA standards.

Bob McGregor asked how long the mine shifts are. Jed Conder said that they are up to 14 hours including travel.

John Molloy said that the drivers doing 14 hour shifts are not asked to do additional activities such as fuelling up that will extend the length of their shift.

Bob McGregor asked what happens if the CCC allows the long shifts to occur and something goes wrong. Ken Bates said that the Committee can object but either way, no responsibility will be placed on the Committee in the event of any issues. Tim Muldoon noted that the CCC is a consultative committee and not a management committee, so there aren't any obligations for the Committee in relation to this issue.

- 3.6.** Ken Bates advised that the letter regarding safety concerns at the Bluevale/Kamilaroi Highway intersection had been issued to Gunnedah Shire Council in December. Jill Scealy requested a signed copy of the letter. Colleen Fuller advised that she sits on the RTA Traffic Committee and to her knowledge the Committee had not received the letter. Colleen committed to following up about whether the letter had been received. Update to be provided at the next meeting.
- 3.7.** Ken Bates advised that the letter regarding safety concerns on the Manilla Road had been issued in person to the Narrabri Shire Council General Manager in December. No response has been received yet. Update to be provided at the next meeting.
- 3.8.** Danny Young said that a template for the newsletter had been developed but Whitehaven was waiting for the final conceptual extension design prior to issuing advice to the community. Danny said

he expects the newsletter will be issued around late February and will include details of what is currently approved and what is proposed.

Bart Crosby asked what the future plans were. Danny Young explained what the recently approved modification allowed us to do and detailed the proposed future extension to the east with options including dumping to the south or north and mining through the northern boundary onto the Idemitsu Boggabri Coal (IBC) lease under a joint venture arrangement. Danny detailed the requirement in the approved modification to liaise with IBC regarding final landforms that blend between the two mines. The original extension option was to dump to the south but the mine is now looking at the possibility of dumping to the north to avoid the formation of a valley between Tarrawonga's and IBC's waste dumps and enable a more considered final landform in conjunction with Boggabri Coal's final landform.

Bart Crosby asked how many years the extension would be for. Danny Young said at this stage it would likely be until 2030. He said that the coal is quite deep at the eastern boundary of the lease. Bart asked if information on the extension would be included in the newsletter and Danny said that the newsletter would provide a general overview of the proposed extension. Danny explained that the Company doesn't want to send out plans and details of the extension before we had some certainty about what design was feasible.

Ken Bates asked how long it would be until that application was submitted and Danny indicated that it would be submitted at the end of 2011 at the earliest.

There was general discussion about the extension possibly including diversion or alteration of water courses to the south of the existing lease. Ken Bates said that relocating water courses would certainly "open up a can of worms" and that he was opposed to it. Ken said that he wants Whitehaven to do a presentation to the community about the extension. Bart commented at the last meeting that Whitehaven said that they didn't know that anything was going to happen and now all of sudden we're telling the Committee about all these plans. He said that when the mine first started Tony Jones (Community Liaison Officer) said they wouldn't notice the mine but now it looks like a moonscape.

Danny Young agreed that the community needs to be informed but said the Company doesn't want to give a presentation on something that we're not certain on yet. In relation to Bart Crosby's previous comment, Jill Scealy stated that Company representatives wouldn't have said at the last meeting that we weren't going to do an extension. Bart said that it was indicated that we didn't know what was going to happen. Tim Muldoon said that his recollection was that the discussions were about the approved modification and a possible extension that was in the very early stages. Danny Young also advised that the possible extension was documented in the Environmental Assessment for the recently approved modification and that details on possible extensions are complicated by the joint venture with Idemitsu.

Whitehaven was questioned about whether the northern dump could be constructed to a greater height to avoid use of the southern dump which could interfere with water courses. Danny Young advised that this could be an option and it is currently being investigated, along with other options, for its feasibility.

Ken Bates said that there is concern within the community about mining companies buying out properties and that it makes the community worry about what is going on. Ken reiterated his concern about interfering with water courses and said that there is an issue with mining companies not wanting to have meetings with the community to discuss what is happening. He said that the community doesn't want the information to be provided when it's too late to do anything about it.

Danny Young said that Whitehaven is not adverse to public consultation and referred to the open day/information sessions for the Narrabri Stage 2 project and the Werris Creek Life of Mine Environmental Assessment (EA). Tim Muldoon noted that the Werris Creek meeting was months before submission of the EA and a lot of the community's concerns were addressed at that time rather than via the EA process. Jill Scealy also briefly explained the EA process in relation to the number of expert consultants used to assess all environmental, social and heritage impacts. She noted that the process can take some time and the original proposal can be very different by the time all of the studies and economic feasibility of the project have been considered.

Ken Bates reiterated his concern about all the property that mining companies are buying. He said not only are the properties being "locked up" as required by legislation but the purchases are resulting in families moving away thereby impacting on the community. He said that they had lost the school bus run, school kids and teachers as a result of property purchases by mining companies.

Bob McGregor said that Boggabri residents initially thought that mining would be good for the community but Boggabri is now worse off than it was before Whitehaven came to the area. Bob provided the example of the hardware store closing and Jed Conder asked whether it closed because it lost business from the farmers that were bought out by the mines or whether it just wasn't a viable business. Jed also noted how a number of mine employees had moved to the Boggabri area to work at the mine. Bob said he wasn't sure why the town was worse off. Jill Scealy noted that the motel in Boggabri is constantly booked out by mining related people and Tim Muldoon commented on strong support given to companies such as Pursehouse Rural. Tim also said that often when properties are purchased the owners are allowed to stay in the residence on a lease back arrangement.

The local community's concern about farming country being locked up for offsets was discussed. Danny Young noted that the government policy includes locking up farmland to convert it back to woodland.

Ken Bates requested that the offset policy be described in the newsletter.

Bart Crosby raised concern about the leaseback option for properties because lessees don't treat property like their own. Tim Muldoon agreed and said it is his responsibility to maintain viable properties so there are now conditions in leases to ensure properties are maintained effectively.

Peter Laird said that some people he has spoken to are concerned about their property values and that people don't want to buy farms next to coal mines.

Peter Laird said that the mine needs to look closely at water management because water that previously drained to the west now drains to the south. Bart Crosby said that contour banks had changed the drainage through his parents place. Bob McGregor said that there haven't been major impacts at his property but there will be if the creek is diverted. Danny Young said that the hydrologist working on the EA will discuss water flows with local landholders as part of this study.

## **4. General Business**

### **4.1. Mine Progress Report**

In the absence of Project Manager, Jason Conomos, Danny Young reported November 2010 – January 2011 production results as follows:

4.0 million BCM overburden removed  
373,000 tonnes of coal recovered

This is behind schedule due to the amount of rainfall in December.

The site has approximately 90 employees.

The rehabilitation status hasn't changed since the last meeting because of the increasing height of the waste emplacement. Relocation of topsoil has commenced as permitted under the recent modification.

Bart Crosby asked about the bund wall on the overburden emplacement mentioned in the EA. Danny said that the bund wall is still to be developed.

### **4.2. Environmental Monitoring Report**

Danny Young presented the environmental monitoring results which are attached in the Environmental Monitoring Report.

Danny also mentioned a complaint received the day before the meeting about an excavator being transported to site bringing down powerlines on Manilla Road. After investigation the transport company accepted responsibility for the issue and committed to contacting Country Energy to make arrangements for paying the cost of repairs.

Danny advised the committee that Whitehaven's General Manager – Open Cuts and the contractor had been requested to review their procedures to prevent the incident occurring again.

Bart Crosby suggested upgrading the line with power poles that increase the height of the line. He also questioned follow up with the transport company to which Danny advised that he had received a copy of the correspondence between the company and Country Energy.

Bart Crosby asked if there was any reason why the lights on the waste dump had to face outwards because he now has to shut the curtains on his daughter's window so she can go to sleep. Danny said it depends on where they are dumping but he would discuss the issue with Jed and the OCE to alleviate lighting issues.

## **5. New Business**

- 5.1.** Bart Crosby asked whether Ken Bates wanted to discuss the issue of pecuniary interests that he had mentioned briefly at the previous meeting. Following general discussion, it was agreed that an item should be added to future agendas that allows committee members to declare any interests that relate to agenda items.
- 5.2.** Bob McGregor asked if it is possible to add a committee member who is a resident of Boggabri. It was discussed that any new members must be appointed as per the guidelines (ie. advertising, DG approval). Bob said we could look at this if there is someone who's not interested in being on the committee anymore.

## **6. Complaints**

Complaints were discussed in the Environmental Monitoring Report.

## **7. Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held at the Tarrawonga Coal Mine Training Room on Wednesday 11th May 2011 at 10:00am. A site tour is proposed.

Meeting closed at 11:50 am.

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Ken Bates - Chairman