

# **Minutes of the Special CCC Meeting of the Tarrawonga Coal Mine Community Consultative Committee**

**Meeting Held:** 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2011 10:15am

**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)  
Clr Colleen Fuller (Gunnedah Shire Rep)  
Mr Ged Conder (Temporary Project Manager)  
Mr Tim Muldoon (Community Liaison Officer)  
Mr Sandy Bull (Community Rep)  
Mr David Sharpe (Engineering Surveyor – Tarrawonga)  
Mr Brian Cullen (GM – Technical Services, Whitehaven)  
Mr Richard Kirwood (Principal, Resource Strategies)

**Apologies:** Mr Peter Laird (Community Rep)  
Mr Jason Conomos (Project Manager)

## **2. Presentation**

- 2.1.** Danny Young provided a Powerpoint presentation which outlined the proposed extension. The Preliminary Environmental Assessment (PEA) was submitted to DoP on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2011 and DoP will issue it to relevant Government agencies. The outcome would be issue of DGRs (Director Generals Requirements).
- 2.2.** Danny advised that a newsletter would be issued to surrounding landholders and CCC members over the next couple of weeks.
- 2.3.** Danny advised that a community meeting would be held (most likely in Boggabri) prior to submission of the EA. Specialist consultants would be present at the meeting to discuss any concerns with community members. The meeting will likely be held later in the year and any issues raised would be dealt with in the EA.
- 2.4.** Ken Bates said that the presentation was excellent and asked what the length of the diversion of Goonbri Creek would be. Danny Young and Richard Kirwood indicated it would be approximately 2.5km. Richard said that the plan was diagrammatic and that the diversion would be designed to mimic the existing creek line. Ken said the diversion to the creek is a major concern to him and that once you change a watercourse you don't know what will happen. He said water is your life blood and we don't want to see it depleted.

- 2.5.** Sandy Bull said he didn't like the idea of changing a watercourse. He said if you change it, you might cut off other water from springs etc. He asked how much the expansion will affect farming and quality of life (dust etc). Danny Young acknowledges that there is a consistent message with the water issue and that Whitehaven would consider what has been discussed. He said it is Whitehaven's intention to have the water specialist talk with local residents about flood history and water flows and that Whitehaven is happy to take suggestions on who to talk to. In relation to other impacts, Danny said the impact studies are yet to be undertaken but when we model the impacts we will be in a much better position to address those concerns.
- 2.6.** Sandy Bull said at present the lights are blazing towards his house. Danny said issues associated with current lighting could be addressed now through discussions with site personnel and adjustments to lighting positions. Sandy said as the mine moves further around the lights get brighter and brighter. Danny indicated that with the proposed extension, out of pit dumping to the south would occur only in the initial years of the project, with all dumping thereafter to the north and in-pit.
- 2.7.** Bart Crosby asked what area would the mine encompass. Danny said approximately 600ha.
- 2.8.** Bart Crosby also raised concern about diversion of the creek and placement of infrastructure in the flood prone area. He said he knows we have specialists looking at it but it's not just the surface water flows but also underground flows. He asked how we would deal with these. Danny said we will do a groundwater assessment that incorporates results from the soil test pits in order to identify the extent of the alluvium. Pump tests plus installation of vibrating wire piezometers would also occur. Danny said that surface water and groundwater assessments must form part of the EA. Richard Kirwood acknowledged that surface water and groundwater studies are critical for the EA. Bart Crosby said it is critical to the local farmers plus areas downstream including Narrabri and Wee Waa. Danny said Whitehaven has approached Boggabri Coal and Maules Creek for information on their groundwater studies in order to identify the cumulative impact and incorporate the modelling information used in their projects in the Tarrawonga proposal.
- 2.9.** Bob McGregor asked if the infrastructure can move to higher ground so it's not on the flood plain. Danny explained that it had been placed in that area because it is already mostly cleared and it allows for optimisation of operations. Richard Kirwood said that various alternatives had been considered and that placing the infrastructure to the west of the mine may sterilise a potential coal resource in that direction. Bob McGregor said to let the creek flow where it wants to because that area is a huge area for recharge. Bart Crosby said it is a major intersection for flood waters. Bob McGregor said if we place the infrastructure on the floodplain the natural water flow directions would be interrupted and there would be potential for flows to impact on property and livelihoods. Danny said Whitehaven would look at the

proposed location in terms of surface water flows and operational requirements, and that a number of options would be considered for infrastructure location in the Environmental Assessment process.

- 2.10.** Bob McGregor said he thinks the proposed infrastructure area on the flood plain is a more critical issue than the diversion upstream. He said interfering with the flood plain will do two things – divert the water from where it needs to go plus prevent recharge.
- 2.11.** Bob McGregor suggested using the cleared country behind Bollol Creek Station as an alternate location for infrastructure.
- 2.12.** Bart Crosby said that Whitehaven hasn't seen a major flood since the mine started. Danny asked whether any community members had photos or records of floods that Whitehaven would be able to view. Bob McGregor said there are photos he can provide.
- 2.13.** Ken Bates said at the end of the day we want to see the generations to continue farming. He said it's on his agenda and it should be on everyone's agenda. He said we have to look after the future and that mines come and go but it's our responsibility to protect the environment or make it better.
- 2.14.** Bart Crosby and Bob McGregor acknowledged that the proposed area for mining is not farming country.
- 2.15.** Ken Bates asked for a copy of the presentation to be attached to the newsletter. Bart Crosby asked if we could leave the newsletters in a public place but the committee agreed that they are best distributed by the CCC members who would be able to better explain what is proposed and that the proposal may change. Brian Cullen explained this is why we have the community information day closer to submission of the EA when the specialists have done their studies and the company will have a defined project to enable informed discussion and response.
- 2.16.** Bart Crosby asked if there would be any advertising in papers etc. Danny said Whitehaven will advertise the community day. Brian Cullen said DoP will also advertise the PEA and EA. Richard Kirwood explained that there are specific steps that DoP follow.
- 2.17.** Ken Bates said that today's presentation was a key step to the community knowing what is going on. Bart Crosby said this is why the CCC wants to be involved from an early stage and to be in discussions with the mine in order to answer queries from the community.
- 2.18.** Danny Young said an update would be provided at the next CCC meeting
- 2.19.** Richard Kirwood explained that in the proposal established in the PEA, Whitehaven has already reconfigured part of the project to avoid

diversion of a section of the creek located south of the current project area.. Brian Cullen said this refinement, which limits dumping to the south will have greater cost implications on the company as we will need more trucks to haul a greater distance but it will be better for the project. It was also noted that changes in one aspect of the project could have implications in other areas. ie making the dump higher to reduce footprint could have implications on noise propagation.

- 2.20.** Ken Bates asked if the conveyor to Boggabri Coal is the preferred option. Brian Cullen said that it is but the mine would still require ongoing road transport in case of issues with the conveyor. It was identified that it was in no-one's interest to create multiple CHPP's or feed points in the area, and it was on this basis that discussions are currently being held with Boggabri Coal in relation to access to their proposed CHPP and rail loop, but they are commercial in confidence and not guaranteed at this stage.
- 2.21.** Bart Crosby asked what impact this extension will have on the already approved operations (eg. the 6m high bund wall). Danny said once we do the impact assessment, we will need to review all approved measures and alter them as required depending upon the outcomes of modelling and required measures to mitigate impact.
- 2.22.** Bart Crosby raised concern about the large surface area of exposed material on the waste dumps and the inability to water the whole dump thereby resulting in dust lift off. Richard Kirwood said that DoP placed contemporary conditions in the recent modification including real time air quality monitoring so we will get good information from that in terms of dust levels and mitigation strategies.
- 2.23.** Colleen Fuller declared a non-pecuniary interest – Namoi Conservation Advisory Committee. She asked where the mine sits with Zone 3 for conservation and referenced discussions with Boggabri Coal. She said she would discuss Aboriginal issues with Whitehaven as the project develops.
- 2.24.** Colleen Fuller said that the newsletter will be good.
- 2.25.** Bob McGregor said the presentation had been good. He said it probably should have happened earlier but acknowledged that the information wasn't available.
- 2.26.** Bart Crosby asked if the CCC members were allowed to discuss this information in public. Brian Cullen said that the PEA is with DoP and it will soon be advertised and placed on the Department's website so there is no issue with discussing the information.
- 2.27.** Danny Young provided a plan showing mining leases in the Gunnedah area.
- 2.28.** Ken Bates asked about Vickery operations. Brian Cullen said that the lease runs out in 2012 so the Company would have to have done

something by then. Whitehaven is only doing baseline studies at the moment.

### 3. Site Tour

- 3.1. Bob McGregor suggested that the infrastructure should be kept on the northern side of the creek.
- 3.2. Sandy Bull said it would be shorter to cart the coal down Dripping Rock Road.
- 3.3. Ken Bates asked if the current area of farming land would be returned once mining had ceased because it is a large area to lose. Bob McGregor said that part of it would be within the pit. Danny Young said that the mine will be required to rehabilitate some of the area back to woodland and some to agricultural land.
- 3.4. Ken Bates said the proposed creek diversion has really got him worried.
- 3.5. Bart Crosby asked if the Bollol Creek Station residence would stay. Danny Young said it would as it is outside the pit limit.
- 3.6. Bob McGregor suggested that the creek diversion could flow into the existing depression adjacent to the creek (on the other side of the road). Richard Kirwood said that the surface water specialists (Gilbert and Associates) would look at this option. Bob said then it might recharge in that area. Richard suggested that the diversion could be a more defined drainage line at the start and then allow it to open out into a shallow waterway.

Meeting closed at 12:30pm.

..... / /  
Ken Bates - Chairman