

METROPOLITAN COAL

COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE - MEETING MINUTES

Date: Wednesday 10 April 2024

Time: Commenced 3:02 pm

Location: Metropolitan Coal Mine Meeting Room, Upper Administration, Helensburgh

Attendees:

- Lisa Andrews (LA) - Independent Chairperson
- Stephen Love (SL) - Peabody Metropolitan Coal
- Kane Organ (KO) - Peabody Metropolitan Coal
- James Hannigan (JH) - Peabody Metropolitan Coal
- Nicolas Tucker (NT) - Peabody Metropolitan Coal (*arrived at 3.31pm*)
- Allan House (AH) - CCC Member
- Kerrie Belter (KB) - CCC Member
- Patricia Gauci (PG) - CCC Member
- Keith Hawkins (KH) - CCC Member
- Vicki Christie (VC) – CCC observer

Apologies:

- Robert Scullion (RS) - CCC Member
- Peter Turner (PT) - CCC Member
- Ron Zwicker (RZ) - Wollongong City Council (WCC)

Welcome and introductions:

- LA welcomed all members to the meeting and thanked members for attending including VC, who was attending as an observer, as a result of indicating her interest in joining the CCC.

Declarations of interest:

- LA declared her position as Independent Chair for the CCC approved by the Director General of the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) and engaged by Peabody.

Action items from previous meeting:

- LA declared CCC meeting minutes 21 November 2023 were finalised on 14 December 2023 and sent to members.

Correspondence:

- 5/12/23 - Email to members with the draft minutes for review.
- 14/12/23 – Email to members with the finalised minutes, with presentation.
- 13/11/23 - Email to members with the Meeting Notice, Agenda & Correspondence Report for this meeting, as well as request for any Community Questions.
- 5/2/24 – Email from PT with request for AR appendices, etc. Referred to Metrop the same day.
- 19/2/24 – Email with EOI for joining CCC as a community representative. Acknowledged and sent Nomination Form, Guidelines & ToR the following day.
- 12/3/24 – Email from IEA (Barnett & May) requesting CCC input into upcoming Audit.
- 14/3/24 – Email to members with change in date for Q1 meeting, including Meeting Notice for 10/4/24.
- 15/3/24 – Email to members with Metropolitan Annual Review link and responses to questions from PT.
- 20/3/24 – Email to IEA consultant advising that there were no comments/concerns from CCC members for inclusion in the audit.
- 3/4/24 – Email from AH with request for Production Statistics from past 3 years. Forwarded to Metrop for response.*
- 4/4/24 - Email to members with the reminder for this meeting.

*Responses included in presentation.

Metropolitan Coal operations update – Stephen Love, Environment & Community Superintendent

A presentation was provided to the CCC regarding:

- Mining & Company Update
- Extraction Plan Update
- Metropolitan Coal Sales
- Exploration Lease plans for 2024
- Longwall Modification
- Camp Creek Monitoring
- 2023 Air Quality

Questions/Comments/Feedback from CCC members in relation to the Presentation:

- AH explained that his queries were in response to ongoing false claims that Metropolitan exports the vast majority of its product coal. SL confirmed that in addition to similar information provided to the CCC last year, a breakdown of destinations for the past 3 years had been compiled in the presentation. Bluescope remains Metropolitan's primary customer, receiving approximately 50% of produced coal each year, with the remainder sold to a number of domestic and international customers.
- KB enquired what CWR sold internationally was used for. SL explained that CWR was predominantly used as a feedstock in cement production.
- AH asked who undertakes flora and fauna surveys for Metropolitan. SL stated that Niche Environment and Heritage conduct these assessments ahead of any surface disturbance activities in the Woronora Special Area. Ecological undertake seasonal vegetation monitoring in both swamp and riparian zones.
- AH alerted Metropolitan Coal to a significant raw sewage spill that flowed into Camp Creek through the old railway tunnel, as well as Wilsons Creek. AH had seen comments suggesting that Metropolitan extract water from old rail tunnel and have been spraying it on the coal stockpiles for dust suppression. SL confirmed no water is extracted from the old rail tunnel and Metropolitan had highlighted to EPA previously that raw sewage spills from the pumping station were another source of pollution in the Camp Creek/Hacking River catchment.
- AH added that a man-hole cover just before the sewer pumping station had "blown" and that raw sewerage flowed on to Vera Street and the side road to Helensburgh Station car park as well as into Metropolitan Tunnel and Helensburgh Station Reserve which feeds directly into the Royal National Park and then Wilsons Creek which flows into the Hacking River.
- LA requested that Depositional Dust Gauges to be explained to assist VC. SL outlined the network of dust gauges around Helensburgh that collect dust over a known surface area to calculate a monthly rate of dust deposition which is compared to Metropolitan's performance indicators. SL explained that Helensburgh is consistently well below the performance indicators and compliance levels for dust in the community.
- KB asked about results from quarterly noise monitoring data. SL explained that the 2023 Annual Review would have more detail once approved by DPHI, but there were no sustained exceedances of the noise performance measures over the past year.

- AH raised the recently released video “Coal Creek” and his concerns with the inaccuracy of the production and content. SL agreed that Metropolitan had identified a number of misleading and dubious claims such as the suggestion that naturally occurring iron oxide leachate in Camp Creek was acid mine drainage, when there is no mechanism for this to occur. Metropolitan continues to engage with any genuine efforts to understand the mine’s operations and thanked the CCC members for their participation in that process.
- LA enquired as to the status of the pending prosecution with the EPA and Land and Environment Court. SL explained that Metropolitan Collieries Pty Ltd (MCPL) had pled guilty to three charges with two others dropped by EPA. As the matter remains before the court, information is limited and further details will be provided to the CCC when available.

General business:

- AH enquired if Metropolitan Coal had pled guilty to pollution of waters. SL confirmed that this was amongst the charges from EPA. JH explained that the addition of any substance, even tap water, to any waterway can be considered pollution under the relevant legislation. AH referred to data collected in the 1980’s after the collapse of the Turkeys Nest dam that found the discharge was not toxic to aquatic organisms. In contrast, Sydney Water had previously been fined for discharging raw sewage into Camp Creek which was toxic and negatively impacted the aquatic environment. SL confirmed that Metropolitan and additional independent aquatic ecology monitoring had consistently identified degraded aquatic ecology in Camp Creek upstream of Metropolitan’s surface facilities area, likely due to urban runoff from Helensburgh which probably included periods of raw sewage overflow.
- AH referred to past and recent data that found spills, such as the Turkeys Nest collapse in 1980s and the one last year, had not been toxic to aquatic organisms.
- LA announced that this CCC meeting will be her last due to personal commitments which require her to stay closer to home. LA stated that she had chaired the committee for 10 years and thanked the members for a respectful and productive CCC. SL thanked LA for her service on behalf of Metropolitan and wished her all the best. LA advised that she has worked closely with DPHI to ensure a smooth transition for the new Independent Chairperson.

- SL highlighted that Helensburgh had recently received 265 mm of rain over three days which had caused widespread damage across the Illawarra. Metropolitan had already been in contact with the local schools to offer any cleanup assistance which may be needed and would consider extending this to any other groups in Helensburgh who may also be in need. Metropolitan is happy for CCC members to put them in touch with the mine.

Meeting closed: 3:43pm

Proposed next meetings: 30th July and 19th November 2024

Action Items: Nil