

Chain Valley/Manning Community Consultative Committee Annual Report for 2018

Details

CCC / Project Name:	Chain Valley Colliery and Manning Colliery	Reporting Period:	January to December 2018
Independent Chairperson:	Margaret MacDonald-Hill	Proponent Contact:	Chris Armit

1. Executive Summary

The Chain Valley/Manning Community Consultative Committee (CCC) was previously two separate community consultative committees with adjacent underground operations under the same operator. Mining in the area has been carried out since the 1960s and both committees were established as a requirement of consent conditions for the continuation of mining approval for Chain Valley Colliery in January 2012 and Manning Colliery in March 2008. The committees were combined with Departmental approval in July 2016 and this arrangement remains in force while mining operations stay within the control of the one operator.

Towards the end of the reporting period, the mines' operators entered into voluntary administration, however, mining operations continued as usual whilst the situation was assessed by the Receivers. In December, the Committee was advised of the sale of the mines' assets to a subsidiary company of Delta Electricity, the owner of the adjoining Vales Point Power Station. The collieries mostly supply coal on the domestic market to the Power Station.

The Chain Valley and Manning Collieries are located on the Central Coast of NSW, approximately sixty kilometres south of Newcastle and bounded generally to the west by the M1 Motorway and the Pacific Highway to the east, abutting the shores of Lake Macquarie. Site infrastructure is within the Central Coast Council Local Government area, whilst current underground mining operations are under the lake in the Lake Macquarie City Council Local Government area.

The committee operates in accordance with the Department of Planning and Environment's 2019 Community Consultative Committee Guidelines for State Significant Projects and comprises:

- six local community representatives;
- two elected representatives from Lake Macquarie City Council;
- two staff members from Central Coast Council;
- two company representatives, with attendance from other personnel as required;
- one independent Chairperson.

Committee meetings are always well attended. The community representatives on the committee are active and well informed within their respective areas and in other organisations, many sharing a common interest, the improvement of the local landscape and surrounds. They bring a wealth of information and local knowledge to the meetings, which is of considerable benefit to mine personnel whilst engaging with the broader community on surveys, monitoring and research. A well established rapport exists

amongst all members and is self evident outside of committee meetings between the community, the two councils and the company.

Despite a series of delays over a number of years, the successful implementation of the Community Advisory Panel (CAP) and community projects awarded under the Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) with Central Coast Council as part of the Chain Valley consent approval (*for the establishment of a community trust to improve public infrastructure and community projects for the areas of Summerland Point, Gwandalan, Chain Valley Bay and Mannering Park*) has been a major focus of the committee. The establishment of the CAP and the 2018 launch of the process for projects awarded under the annual funding arrangement was a long awaited and much anticipated goal of the committee. Collaboration and a cohesive community has delivered many worthwhile improvements to the area and supports the tightly held social belief that benefits should flow through to those communities directly impacted by mining.

With the mines' future in doubt during late 2018, the major concern of the committee was for the workforce and the prospect of uncertain times ahead and the accompanying stress on local families. Despite negative attitudes towards coal mining in other areas being the norm, it is not the case here where the mines and personnel are truly an accepted part of the community and considered good neighbours.

For the reporting period, other matters discussed at the meetings included:

- general environmental management and monitoring, including air quality, noise, seagrass and aquatic flora, subsidence, foreshore monitoring program and bathymetric survey
- vandalism at colliery (miners) cottages
- dust suppression trial
- operational updates, approvals, audits, exceedances and incident reports
- site identification and installation of real time noise monitor
- improvements to VPA process and notifications, Council community information sessions
- complaints
- Annual Reviews
- future of Catherine Hill Bay Jetty
- updates to website
- removal of obsolete subsidence signage on Pacific Highway
- community projects

2. CCC activities over last 12 months

- Committee meetings were held in the months of February, May, August and November 2018.
- The committee had an underground site visit prior to the February meeting.
- Attendance at meetings is consistently high, almost without exception, other than occasional apologies due to unforeseen commitments. The committee sets its

meeting dates at the end of each calendar year for the ensuing year to avoid any known potential conflicts.

- Additional consultation activities on VPA process and grant allocations were carried out by Council at the suggestion of the committee.
- The development of a newsletter for information of Village residents is also a suggestion of the committee.

3. Key issues

As stated above, the key issues for the Committee were the establishment of the CAP and the community trust managed by Central Coast Council. The finalisation of the sale of the collieries to Delta Electricity subsidiary company, Great Southern Energy (GSE) and the details for future operations will be of ongoing interest to the committee. There are no specific concerns regarding the mines' performance and compliance with regulatory authorities.

Given the history of the area from legacy subsidence issues several decades ago, the committee maintains its interest in any environmental impacts from mine subsidence and the results of subsidence monitoring, the miniwall method of extraction and mine layout.

It is anticipated that the meeting schedule and reporting structure to the committee will remain similar to previous years, in accordance with the consent conditions of approval and departmental guidelines.

Issue	Actions Taken	Next Steps
Establishment of CAP and Community Trust	CAP appointed, including some committee members and process of grants applications explained in community workshops.	Maintain ongoing interest and offer suggestions where appropriate.
Village Newsletter	Initial Village Newsletter provided as requested. Subsequent version on hold pending sale to GSE.	Finalise and distribute with latest information during 2019.

4. Focus for next 12 months


The planned activities for 2019 will be guided by the contributions of the committee members following consultation with GSE.

These activities are likely to include:

- attendance and introduction of GSE personnel to the committee.
- any changes to meeting standards and reporting structure to the committee and plans for the future management of the collieries under the new ownership.

To the best of my knowledge, there are no outstanding or emerging issues that have not been addressed or are in the process of being so, to the committee's satisfaction.

Committee Meeting minutes and presentations are available on the website within two weeks of each meeting.

Signature of Chair:	
Date:	April 24 2019.