

Chain Valley/Manning Community Consultative Committee Annual Report for 2020

Details

CCC / Project Name:	Chain Valley Colliery and Manning Colliery	Reporting Period:	January to December 2020
Independent Chairperson:	Margaret MacDonald-Hill	Proponent Contact:	Lachlan McWha

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. Ownership of the mines' assets to Great Southern Energy trading as Delta Coal was finalised in April 2019.

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 collieries supply coal to the Vales Point Power Station.

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;
- an elected representative from Lake Macquarie City Council;
- a representative from Central Coast Council;
- two company representatives, with attendance from other personnel as required;
- one independent Chairperson.

Attendance by community members at committee meetings remains consistently high, although the impact of Covid-19 during the reporting year resulted in regular face to face meetings being replaced with video conference meetings. The May and August meetings were conducted via telephone/video conference. The technology presented some challenges for the members, however, all did their best to overcome these difficulties and diligently continue to represent their local communities.

Consultants from Umwelt undertaking the Environmental and Social Impact Assessments for the proposed Consent Consolidation Project and the Continued Operations Project were invited guests to the August and November meetings.

Umwelt also engaged with the members on an individual basis, outside of the meetings, to assist in the preparation of their assessments.

Representatives from Subsidence Advisory NSW were also invited to the November meeting but unfortunately because of technology issues, their presentation was deferred to the February 2021 meeting.

Central Coast Council's Grants Officers were invited guest speakers at the August meeting and provided information on the next round of funding, eligibility and upcoming community information sessions on the Delta Coal's Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) with Central Coast Council, established in 2017. The Council representatives took on notice the committee members' concern that adequate notice be provided widely throughout the community and social media, of upcoming funding rounds to allow the community time to prepare submissions.

Part of the Chain Valley consent dictates 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. A request was made by a community member that this be extended to cover the additional suburbs to the west side of Lake Macquarie as mining operations progress in the Northern extension area. It was noted this could change via a future modification. Members also discussed the VPA tonnage rate paid to Central Coast Council and the disbursement of rates expenditure and where such money was likely to be spent.

Some of the CCC members are also members of the Community Advisory Panel (CAP) and this remains a key focus of the whole committee, as does the community projects awarded under the agreement.

As noted in previous reporting, all the community members of the CCC are very active in their respective neighbourhoods and there exists a strong 'community of interest' amongst them, to see the benefits of mining remain in the area where the mines' operate. Delta Coal supports the local communities surrounding its operations by providing additional support through in kind support, cash donations, staff time and charitable donations. The committee appreciates the company's receptive approach to members' suggestions. Engagement with members occurs regularly outside of scheduled meetings and the good rapport is self evident amongst all members.

For the reporting period, other matters discussed at the meetings included, but not limited to:

- general environmental management and monitoring, including air quality, noise, seagrass and aquatic flora, subsidence, foreshore monitoring program and bathymetric survey
- Land management, including weed management within colliery holdings and lake foreshore
- environmental improvement programs including pollution reduction and dam desilting, fan upgrade and noise mitigation, sewer upgrade, remnant coal stockpile clean-up, removal of redundant infrastructure and bushfire hazard reduction
- operational updates, approvals, audits, exceedances and incident reports
- proposed modifications to Chain Valley and Mannering Consents

- long term mine plans
- Peer review of groundwater and subsidence assessments
- Demolition of old miners' cottages and discovery of two midden sites
- Community Newsletters, Stakeholder Evaluation Survey and development of frequently asked questions information sheets for website
- Community information sessions
- recruitment of new community member for Western side of the lake
- complaints
- Annual Reviews
- Catherine Hill Bay and Jetty rehabilitation
- updates to website
- community projects
- planned surface exploration including geophysical surveys – drone magnetometer and planned surface drilling
- regional groundwater monitoring and modelling program
- Covid-19 site procedure

2. CCC activities over last 12 months

- Committee meetings were held in the months of February, May, August and November 2020. The May and August committee meetings were conducted remotely via MS Teams.
- Recruitment and appointment of a new community member to represent the Morisset Peninsular area as mining operations extend to the western side of Lake Macquarie.
- Additional consultation activities on VPA process and grant allocations were carried out by Council at the suggestion of the committee.
- The committee's suggestion for a newsletter for information of Macquarie Shores Home Village residents and other areas has been initiated throughout the year.

3. Key issues

As stated above, the key issues for the Committee were seeking improvements to the timing and advertisement of the VPA grants funding to the broader community, increasing information to the community on Delta Coal's operations and future plans and seeking overall improvement to the sites.

The Committee maintains its interest on all improvements to site infrastructure, now well advanced by Delta Coal. Part of the improvements has seen a slight improvement in noise complaints, although complaints from one resident at Macquarie Shores Home Village regarding the Mannering Colliery site remain constant. There have been no specific concerns raised by members regarding the mines' performance and compliance with regulatory authorities.

With the legacy issue of mine subsidence several decades ago, the committee maintains its vigilance in the miniwall method of extraction and the mine layout, any environmental impacts from subsidence and the monitoring results. The changes in the 2017 Coal Mine Subsidence Compensation Act and the new process for claims will be addressed by Subsidence Advisory NSW at the February 2021 meeting. A list of questions from the committee has been compiled and sent to Subsidence Advisory.

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. The committee sets the ensuing year's meeting schedule in November each year to avoid any known conflicts.

Issue	Actions Taken	Next Steps
VPA, CAP and Community Trust	<p>Central Coast Council Grants officers joined August CCC meeting via video in response to CCC request.</p> <p>Broader dissemination and advertising of funding rounds by Council. Council Community Information Sessions held online because of Covid-19 to advise residents of the fund, timing of grants available and how to apply.</p> <p>Handout Fact sheet on fund program produced.</p>	<p>Maintain ongoing interest and offer suggestions where appropriate.</p> <p>Repeat process by Central Coast Council.</p>
Broader community engagement	<p>Delta Coal has issued four community newsletters during 2020 and included operational updates, proposed modifications, development assessments and applications.</p> <p>Community Information Sessions were held during March and December.</p> <p>Advertisement and recruitment of CCC community member for Morisset Peninsular March 2020</p> <p>Delta Coal Fact sheets on Magnetometer Surveys and Frequently asked questions available on website November 2020.</p>	<p>Ongoing as required.</p> <p>Ongoing as required</p> <p>Member approved by DPIE April 2020</p> <p>Further fact sheets ongoing as required</p>

Reduce potential noise complaints	CVC Fan noise and potential impacts on new subdivision as new houses built and population increases. Decommissioning and bypass of rotary breaker at Mannering Colliery Enclosure of the coal handling plant at Mannering Colliery	CVC Fan upgraded and further noise mitigation undertaken: Completed June 2020, noise curtains and doors installed at Mannering Colliery; Installation of underground coal breaker operational from August 2020 at Mannering Colliery.
Aerial map of monitoring and licensed discharge points	Information provided to November meeting	Ongoing and will be included in each presentation.

4. Focus for next 12 months


The planned activities for 2020 will be guided by the contributions of all the committee members.

Topics may include:

- Mine subsidence in the build and natural environment
- Water quality in Lake Macquarie
- Air quality
- site tour

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:	March 9 2020.