

Dartbrook Underground Mine Community Consultative Committee – Annual Report for 2022

CCC / Project Name:	Dartbrook Underground Mine CCC	Reporting Period:	March 2021 to March 2022
Independent Chairperson:	Lisa Andrews	Proponent Contact:	Dorian Walsh (consultant)

1. Executive Summary

Dartbrook is owned and managed by AQC Dartbrook Management Pty Limited (AQC) and is located 10 kilometres north-west of Muswellbrook and 4.5 km south-west of Aberdeen, NSW. From 1993 until October 2006, Dartbrook operated as an underground longwall coal mine. Former owners of the mine elected to suspend mining and the operation was placed under Care and Maintenance from 1 January 2007. Under Care and Maintenance, site activities are generally limited to the maintenance of:

- The Hunter Tunnel, which along with the Kayuga interseam drift, are the only areas of the underground mine that are still accessible. The Hunter Tunnel and Kayuga interseam drift connect to the Eastern and Kayuga Western mine entrances, respectively;
- The Western Facilities (West Site), which is located west of the New England Highway and comprises the administration office, a small workshop, and Wynn and Kayuga mine entrances to the underground mine; and
- The Eastern Facilities (East Site), which is located east of the New England Highway and comprises the Coal Handling and Preparation Plant (CHPP), rail load out facilities, cleared coal stockpiles and the rehabilitated Reject Emplacement Area.

In February 2018, AQC lodged an application to modify DA 231-7-2000 (MOD7) to provide further operational options for Dartbrook (in addition to those already approved) to recommence mining via limited bord and pillar underground mining within the Kayuga Seam and to extend the approval period under DA 231-7-2000 by 5 years (to 5 December 2027). DA 231-07-2000 (MOD7) was determined by the NSW Independent Planning Commission (IPCN) on 9 August 2019. The IPCN approved the proposed recommencement of mining activities but rejected the proposed five-year extension to the consent approval period. It was AQC's opinion that without the extension to operate under DA 231-7-2000 for a further five years it was impractical to recommence mining at Dartbrook, accordingly, in November 2019, AQC announced its decision to lodge an appeal against the IPCN determination in the NSW Land and Environment Court.

The judgement of the MOD7 appeal was handed down by the L&E Court on 11 March 2022, thereby extending the period of approval for mining operations under the Dartbrook development consent (DA 200-5-2003) to December 2027.

During the appeal process, the CCC met at a reduced frequency due to the mine being in "care and maintenance". Monitoring has continued to be carried out in accordance with regulatory compliance.

CCC activities over last 12 months

The committee met in June 2021, December 2021 and March 2022 and received comprehensive presentations regarding activities that have occurred, including:

- Dartbrook Underground Modification 7 Update of Appeal in NSW L&E Court.

- Environmental Monitoring - results provided for Rainfall, High Volume Air Sampling, Dust Deposition, Surface Water – Hunter River and Dart Brook
- Complaints and Incidents Summary
- Land Management
- Stakeholder Consultation
- Mining Operations Plan (Care and Maintenance)
- Attendance at the meetings is consistent, with the occasional apology due to competing commitments of volunteers.
- There were no joint CCC's held.

2. Key issues

Trending topics of committee discussion can be summarised as:

Issue	Actions Taken	Outcome
NSW Land & Environment Court Proceedings	MOD 7 appeal handed down on 11 March 2022.	CCC has been kept informed throughout this process.
Environmental Monitoring	The proponent provides detailed information of its environmental monitoring on site and its commitment to meeting legislative and regulatory compliance.	Ongoing presentations to CCC.
Land Management	Sale of agricultural land, above and surrounding the project site.	A number of properties have been sold by AQC.
Management Plans	Management Plans are updated/revised where required.	The CCC are advised of approval of updated management plans.
Future of site	AQC considering its options on the potential sale of the Dartbrook mine.	Decision by shareholders to be made. CCC to be kept informed.
Care and Maintenance MOP	Lodged 30/11/20 with DPE Resources Regulator.	AQC awaiting review comments.
Mine Closure Plan	Lodged 04/12/20 with DPE Resources Regulator.	AQC awaiting review comments.

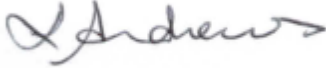
3. Focus for next 12 months

The planned activities for 2022 will be guided by the contributions of the CCC members. These activities are likely to include:

- Continued updates on environmental monitoring of the site (under care and maintenance).
- Continued updates provided on environmental performance.
- Continued updates on Management Plans, Mining Operations Plan, End of Mine Life Plan
- Proposed site inspection.
- Future of mine site operations/potential sale of asset.

To the best of my knowledge, there are no outstanding or emerging issues that have not been addressed.

CCC minutes and presentations are available on the website.

Signature of Chair:	
Date:	11 April 2022