

Metropolitan Coal Community Consultative Committee Annual Report 2021

CCC / Project Name:	Metropolitan Coal	Reporting Period:	March 2020 to March 2021
Independent Chairperson:	Lisa Andrews	Proponent Contact:	Stephen Love

1. Executive Summary

Metropolitan Coal Mine is one of the oldest continually operating coal mines in Australia and has been part of the Helensburgh community for 129 years. With its location amongst residential areas and the national park in Helensburgh, Metropolitan continues to meet its environmental monitoring requirements and community expectations in a sensitive region.

The committee members continue to receive informative presentations from staff on the mine's operations and compliance with conditions of approval, including:

- Findings of the Independent Environmental Audit and Annual Review.
- Resource Regulator Audit
- Regular updates on the Independent Expert Panel on Mining in the Catchment and Metropolitan's contribution in the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment.
- Updates on Extraction Plan & Long Wall modifications.
- Noise monitoring and mitigation improvements, including the implementation of low-noise idlers.
- Air quality results.
- Groundwater monitoring results.
- Trucking of Coal Wash Rejects (CWR) and beneficial reuse options.
- Rail transport.
- Updates to the Water Management Plan (WMP), including the stream remediation plans for Eastern Tributary and Waratah Rivulet.
- Pillar Extraction areas.
- Consultation regarding the consideration and assessment of options for the heritage powerhouse.
- COVID-19 controls on site.
- Complaints register; and
- Its community investment program in the region.

The Community Consultative Committee (CCC) operates in accordance with the Department of Planning & Environment's Community Consultative Committee Guidelines for State Significant Development (January 2019). The committee membership consists of:

- Four local community representatives
- One stakeholder group representative (National Parks Association)
- One Wollongong City Council delegate
- One Wollondilly City Council delegate
- Three company representatives; and
- One Independent Chairperson.

I am pleased to report that Peabody Energy continue to consult with the community at a high level with three meetings held over the calendar year, being April, August and December, with good attendance by members.

The CCC is an effective communication forum between the community, the Council and the company. It functions well and accordingly, fulfils its objectives under the Department's guidelines.

2. CCC activities over last 12 months

- There were meetings held in April 2020 (virtually due to COVID-19 restrictions), August 2020 and December 2020.
- The CCC has been kept informed by the company of the Independent Expert Panel's investigation on the impact of mining activities in the Greater Sydney Water Catchment Special Areas, with a particular focus on risks to the quantity of water in the Illawarra Catchment.
- The COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted the business of Metropolitan Mine, which required them to restructure to better meet current demands. Accordingly, Longwall production was initially decreased and two thirds of the workforce working reduced hours and days. Following this, Metropolitan further announced that the mine would be idled during January and February 2021, highlighting that all employees would have access to entitlements such as leave and that all statutory and compliance requirements would be maintained during this period.
- Metropolitan are undertaking a chailings trial where a biochar-like product is created from the left over material to generate a material to be used to improve soil nutrient and moisture holding capacity. Part of this trial will involve approval by the EPA.
- Metropolitan are also consulting with Wollongong City Council regarding Helensburgh Landfill and the use of CWR as fill. Feasibility works are currently in progress.
- Metropolitan also propose to contribute funds towards Council's Helensburgh Streetscape Masterplan for town centre improvements, which will include roadworks.
- Metropolitan has lodged an Exploration Application ELA5918 to prospect for a viable resource that may extend the life of Metropolitan beyond 2032. If approved exploration activities are likely to occur in 2022 and if a viable resource can be defined an in depth and highly detailed State Significant Development process will commence
- One community representative resigned due to moving out of the area and retiring to the Central Coast. Recruitment is on hold at the moment as the committee still continues to meet in accordance with the guidelines.
- Attendance at the meetings is high, with the occasional apology due to other competing priorities.
- A site inspection of the Eastern Tributary was conducted in December 2020.
- There were no joint CCC's held.

3. Key issues

Trending topics of committee discussion can be summarised as:

Issue	Actions Taken	Outcome
Recycling of water on site	Efforts to increase water recycling and reduce potable water consumption at Metropolitan.	Ongoing updates to CCC.
Noise	The company operates in accordance with its approved Noise Management Plan. All noise complaints are recorded and staff take appropriate action at the time they are reported.	Noise complaints are presented at each CCC.
Dust	The company operates in accordance with its approved Air Quality Management Plan.	Dust monitoring results are presented at each CCC.
Eastern Tributary Update	Metropolitan continues to provide updates on the remediation of the Eastern Tributary.	Site inspection undertaken in December 2020. Ongoing updates provided at each CCC.
Historic Powerhouse	Metropolitan Coal commissioned an assessment of the structural integrity of the historic powerhouse building which concluded that it would be uneconomical to repair.	Wollongong City Council hold an opposing view and has refused demolition. Negotiations are ongoing as Metropolitan are very concerned with potential safety risks. CCC to be kept informed.
Restricted use of Woronora Recreation Area	An issue was raised via community representations regarding Woronora Recreation Area closures throughout 2019-2020 with suggestions that this was due to low water levels caused by mining impacts.	It was explained that closures were due to several upgrades at the recreation area which included asbestos removal. Further, that Water NSW provided information on its website on the status of the major refurbishment works, water levels, etc.
ELA5198	An Exploration Application (ELA5918) lodged to prospect for a viable resource that may extend the life of Metropolitan beyond 2032. If approved exploration activities are likely to occur in 2022 and if a viable resource can be defined an in	CCC to be kept informed.

	depth and highly detailed State Significant Development process will commence.	
Operations of Metropolitan Mine	The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the business of the Metropolitan Mine requiring changes to operations and staffing.	Updates provided at each CCC.

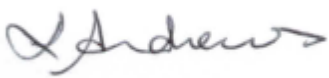
4. Focus for next 12 months

The planned activities for 2021 will be guided by the contributions of the CCC members. These activities are likely to include:

- A site inspection.
- Continued updates on environmental monitoring of the site.
- Continued updates on the remediation of the Eastern Tributary.
- Continued updates on the status of operations at the mine.
- Continued updates on the chailings trial.
- Continued updates on Community Support Program.
- Continued consultation and updates regarding the future of the Historic Powerhouse building.
- Continued updates on the findings and recommendations of the Independent Expert Panel for Mining in the Catchment.

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:	21 April 2021