

Abel Coal Community Consultative Committee Annual Report for Year 2018

Community Consultative Committee Details

CCC / Project Name:	Abel Coal Mine	Reporting Period:	January to December 2018
Independent Chairperson:	Margaret MacDonald-Hill	Proponent Contact:	Phillip Brown

1. Executive Summary

The Abel Community Consultative Committee was established in 2007 as a consent condition of the Minister for Planning's June 2007 approval of the project. Abel Mine is an underground coal mine located approximately twenty three kilometres north west of Newcastle and bounded roughly to the south by John Renshaw Drive and George Booth Drive, west of Buttai Creek and east of the M1 Expressway, mostly within the Cessnock Local Government area. Abel uses the adjoining Bloomfield Coal Handling Preparation Plant, however as the mine has been on care and maintenance since early May 2016, no mining operations have taken place during then or for the reporting period.

The Abel Mine Committee operates in accordance with the Department of Planning and Environment's 2019 Community Consultative Committee Guidelines for State Significant Projects. The Committee is currently comprised of:

- four local community representatives;
- a representative from Cessnock City Council;
- a representative from Bloomfield Colliery
- two Abel Coal representatives: the Environmental and Community Relations Superintendent and the Operations Manager, with attendance from other personnel as required;
- one independent Chairperson.

Meetings were initially held quarterly, however when the mine was placed on care and maintenance, the committee elected to reduce its meeting schedule in 2017 to biannual meetings, until such time as and when operations resume. Attendance numbers at the meeting are consistently high as all members demonstrate a very strong interest in their local community and environment.

At each meeting the committee is briefed on a vast array of topics of interest, together with a powerpoint presentation sent out in advance of meetings. For the reporting period this included mine subsidence, feral animal management, bushfire management, the Donaldson Trust and the current status of operations. The committee also discussed, but not limited to:

- general environmental management & monitoring, including air quality, noise, surface water, groundwater, flora and fauna.
- metrological monitoring
- water management and dam monitoring
- sub-tropical rainforest monitoring

- Pambalong Nature Reserve monitoring
- community complaints
- future mining operations
- replacement of Council representative vacancy

A good rapport exists between all parties based on trust undoubtedly established over the years and the collective knowledge and understanding of the committee is noticeably visible. It is my understanding that the community members have remained constant since the CCC's inception and prior as the Community Liaison Committee, resulting in a well informed and diverse group of people, working together as a competent committee.

2. CCC activities over last 12 months

- Committee meetings were held in March and September 2018.
- Attendance at meetings is high with rare apologies due to unforeseen commitments.
- A new member was sought from Cessnock Council to replace the vacancy following the resignation of a staff member from Cessnock Council. This vacancy has now been filled by an elected representative.
- There were no site visits undertaken for the reporting period.
- No joint Committee meetings were held, although the Environmental Advisor from the Bloomfield Colliery is a member of the committee.

3. Key issues

As the Abel Mine has been on care and maintenance for some years, there are no real key issues at this time. Transitional changes from the former Mine Subsidence Board processes into Subsidence Advisory NSW remain of interest to the committee, particularly to the community representatives and the people they represent. It is interesting to note that the committee had previously lobbied the Board over a number of years for the inclusion of the Black Hill area into a mine subsidence district. It was successful in achieving this with Subsidence Advisory NSW.

The future of the Abel Mine and development of the surrounding area also continues to be of interest to the committee.

Issue	Actions Taken	Next Steps
Delays in repairs to Black Hill Road	Raised at CCC meetings. Liaison between Abel, Cessnock Council and Subsidence Advisory NSW. Advice sought on timeline for repairs.	Ongoing coordination between parties.
Mine subsidence	Raised at CCC meeting on behalf	Followed up with Subsidence Advisory to contact resident to

issues	of local resident.	explain delays and new process of claims.
---------------	--------------------	---


4. Focus for next 12 months

The planned activities for 2019 will be guided by the contributions and interest of the CCC members. These activities are likely to include:

- review of ongoing environmental monitoring.
- operations and future mining potential.
- development of surrounding land in vicinity of the Abel leases.

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 17 2019