

Airly Mine Community Consultative Committee Annual Report year ended 31/12/2020

Independent Chairperson

Gerard Martin

Proponent

Paul Williams Group Manager Environmental Services
Centennial Coal

1. Executive Summary

The committee's activities were impacted by the COVID-19 lockdown in New South Wales. Scheduled meeting for 21 April 2020 was cancelled. The committee met on 25 February, 5 August and 27 October 2020. Normally the committee would meet 4 to 5 times per annum.

Current Committee Membership Comprises:

Gerard Martin	Chairperson
Jill Rowley	Capertee Valley Landcare and Community Representative
Wayne McAndrew	Councillor, Lithgow City Council
Lisa Menke	NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service
Brian Nichols	Mine Manager, Centennial Airly
Esme Martens	Community Representative at Large
Sam Price	Environment & Community Coordinator, Centennial Airly

The Committee is well balanced and works harmoniously. Meetings are well attended. We are undertaking another round of advertising to attract new membership. Whilst we have not been able to attract an indigenous representative Airly mine management work cooperatively with local aboriginal groups.

Severe drought conditions affected the mine operations forcing the mine to import water by rail tanker from the Reedy Creek Dam at Charbon, a currently unallocated industrial supply. The issue was handled transparently with no adverse impacts on the local community.

Airly mine has a good record of compliance on environment, mining and cultural issues. An issue around subsidence is being addressed by mine management. It will be referred to later in the report. The only complaint received on environment and community matters was the alleged speeding of a coal train through the village of Capertee.

Airly mine commissioned a 2 MW solar farm early in 2020 to supplement the mine power supply. The initiative has received very favourable comment in the community.

In 2019 the Airly community consultative committee appointed an independent auditor to conduct an external review of the Airly Mine 2019 Annual Water Monitoring Report. The audit was carried out by Joshua Lloyd of ZOIC and the findings reported to our CCC meeting on 27 October 2020.

2. CCC Activities During 2020

Meetings CCC met 3 times: 25 February, 5 August and 27 October 2020. Meetings were well attended with one member missing 2 meetings due to health issues.

Site visits

No site visits were held due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Joint CCC's held

The joint CCC meeting to be held in Lithgow in July was cancelled.

As Chair I participated in a Zoom meeting organised by DPIE to discuss strategies on how to operate in the Covid19 environment.

3. Key Issues

Airly Mine Water Monitoring

The CCC appointed an industry expert to conduct an independent review of Airly's groundwater management plan and ongoing monitoring.

Key findings of the review were that the below average rainfall over recent years is likely to be the greatest contributor to variations in water flow, levels and water quality across the year.

Shallow groundwater monitoring sites all showing varying responses to rainfall with the exception of one location. The steady and linear style of drawdown over the three-year period is not consistent with mining activity in the area based on the current data. The most likely explanation for the drawdown is climatic drying following its installation at the end of 2016 which was an above average rainfall year followed by three years of drought.

Our committee has a continuing dialogue with water users in the Capertee Valley to monitor water issues. In the past we have used community forums to hear from valley residents. Mine staff have met on site with landowners and set up a number of monitoring stations-to ensure accurate information on an ongoing basis.

Airly Mine Modification 3

Modification 3 would have seen the mine plan altered to raise production from 1.8 million to 3million tons per annum. The plan was in its final assessment phase and awaiting determination from the Department of Planning Industry and Environment. Our committee had been involved in extensive discussions with the mine operators and the local community over this very important development. Unfortunately at the 11th hour the company have withdrawn the proposal due to the current state of the coal industry.

Mine Subsidence

As stated earlier Airly mine has an enviable track record in handling and monitoring environmental and mining issues. Recently there is evidence that there are areas where the subsidence tolerance allowed in the mine's approval has been exceeded. Monitoring results show a maximum of 550 mm of subsidence compare to the 150 mm predicted in the original Environmental impact statement. Fortunately the subsidence does not seem to be widespread with two cracks being identified on Mount Airly.

Mine management is in discussions with the Department of Mines Expert Panel on the issue and are implementing a number of adaptive management strategies to reduce the level of any future substance.

4. Focus for 2021

The major focus in the foreseeable future for our committee is to monitor progress on the subsidence issue, to continue the cooperative partnership with Capertee Valley land owners in relation to both surface and subsurface water and raise community concerns with the mine operator as and if they arise. We will be looking to expand our membership to ensure we have as diverse a committee as possible.

Signature of Chair

Date: