

Chain Valley/Manning Community Consultative Committee Annual Report for 2019

Details

CCC / Project Name:	Chain Valley Colliery and Manning Colliery	Reporting Period:	January to December 2019
Independent Chairperson:	Margaret MacDonald-Hill	Proponent Contact:	Chris Armit

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 mostly supply coal on the domestic market 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;
- two elected representatives from Lake Macquarie City Council;
- two staff members 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 high. The community representatives are dedicated to their local communities, active and well informed and provide a very effective exchange conduit amongst the many other organisations and networks they are involved in. As stated in previous reporting, they bring a wealth of information and local knowledge to the meetings, which is of considerable benefit to mine personnel as they engage with the broader community. A good rapport exists amongst all members and is self evident outside of committee meetings between the committee members and the company.

Delta Coal's Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) with Central Coast Council, established in 2017, as part of the Chain Valley consent approval (*for 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*) and the activities of the Community Advisory Panel (CAP) remains a key focus of the committee, as does the community projects awarded under the agreement. As noted in previous reporting, some members of the CCC are also community representatives on the CAP.

Central Coast Council's Grants Officer was an invited guest speaker at the August meeting and provided information on the next round of funding, eligibility and upcoming community information sessions. The committee members disseminated this information widely to their respective networks to ensure adequate notice and preparation of submissions.

The committee recognises that Delta Coal also 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.

For the reporting period, other matters discussed at the meetings included:

- general environmental management and monitoring, including air quality, noise, seagrass and aquatic flora, subsidence, foreshore monitoring program and bathymetric survey
- pollution reduction program - sewer upgrade
- operational updates including modifications to Chain Valley and Mannering Consents to allow transport of coal via an underground linkage and first workings definition and the acquisition of a mining lease into the Northern Mining area.
- weed management
- vandalism at colliery (miners) cottages
- dust suppression trial
- operational updates, approvals, audits, exceedances and incident reports
- improvements to VPA process and notifications, Council community information sessions
- complaints
- Triennial Independent Audits and Action Plans
- Annual Reviews
- future of Catherine Hill Bay (CHB) Jetty and CHB rehabilitation
- updates to website
- community projects

2. CCC activities over last 12 months

- Committee meetings were held in the months of February, May, August and November 2019.

- Attendance at meetings is consistently high, almost without exception, other than occasional apologies due to unforeseen commitments. The committee sets its meeting dates at the end of each calendar year for the ensuing year to avoid any known potential conflicts.
- Additional consultation activities on VPA process and grant allocations were carried out by Council at the suggestion of the committee.
- The development of a newsletter for information of Village residents and other areas, a suggestion of the committee, has been implemented.

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 the finalisation of the sale of the collieries to Delta Coal and plans for future operations.

The Committee maintains its interest on all improvements to site infrastructure, now progressing with the new ownership. Noise complaints from Macquarie Shores Home Village concerning the Mannering Colliery site have risen sharply over the period and the actions taken by the company to address this have been widely discussed; including the construction of a noise attenuation blanket in key areas of the rotary breaker, reduction of emergency and start-up alarm noise levels, reduction of noise from the front end loader, the planned removal of the surface rotary breaker to underground, completion of Noise Compliance Monitoring and Reporting, open forum community information session at Macquarie Shores Home Village held in November and installation of a real time noise monitoring system at the Village. No complaints have been received at the adjoining Chain Valley site. There have been no specific concerns raised by members regarding the mines' performance and compliance with regulatory authorities.

Given the history of the area from legacy subsidence issues several decades ago, the committee maintains its interest in any environmental impacts from mine subsidence and the results of subsidence monitoring, the miniwall method of extraction and mine layout.

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.

A survey of the committee members' views on the efficacy of the CCC revealed positive feedback and some interesting observations:

"I enjoy the meetings and find them very informative. My only real concern is the fact that we only very rarely get a representative from Lake Macquarie Council and never from Central Coast Council. How is the council supposed to know what is happening with developments within their LGA? As a cynic I would suggest that as we are on the border of both councils there is no real interest in our area".

"Simple answer is yes, the CCC is definitely meeting its brief and providing a forum for keeping the community advised on matters which may directly or indirectly affect them and their quality of life. It also allows for any issues which may be perceived to be causing angst by some residents to be tabled and dealt with and any actions to be relayed to those so affected".

"I think all CCC's are essential for all industry that affects nearby residents and is good that it is put in place by government. There are some bad examples in existence. I would like to see a more revolving door for community representatives where each year it is advertised for new representatives and if any do apply, then some current ones vacate until the following yearsto avoid any alignment with members protecting the interests of the mine ...".

"The CCC has always been informative and meaningful for me. Long may it continue".

" I have no problems with the CCC and how it operates, does it achieve its objectives? For me personally and the community I think so ".

"the meeting runs more efficiently than do the power station meetings. I think that encourages attendance because peoples' time is valued and they can make a contribution without wasting time".

Issue	Actions Taken	Next Steps
VPA, CAP and Community Trust	<p>Central Coast Council attended August CCC meeting in response to CCC concerns.</p> <p>Broader dissemination and advertising of funding rounds by Council. Council Community Information Sessions held at Mannering Park, Gwandalan and Chain Valley Bay 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 issued a July Village Newsletter on new ownership, operational updates and proposed modifications.</p> <p>Delta Coal Fact sheet issued October 2019.</p> <p>November 2019 Macquarie Shores Home Village community information session.</p>	<p>Ongoing as required.</p> <p>Community Information Sessions planned for 2020.</p>
Reduce potential noise complaints	<p>CCC member raised fan noise and potential impacts on new subdivision as new houses built and population increases.</p>	<p>Inspection, noise monitoring.</p>

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:

- opportunities for community sponsorship
- new committee member from western side of Lake Macquarie
- 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:	April 3 2020.