

Community Consultative Committee Details

CCC / Project Name:	Stratford Coal Mining Complex	Reporting Period:	January - December 2019
Independent Chairperson:	Margaret MacDonald-Hill	Proponent Contact:	Alarna Bristow

1. Executive Summary

The Stratford Community Consultative Committee (CCC) is a long established committee initiated in 1995 as part of the Stratford Coal Mine Development Consent approval. With the subsequent approval of the Stratford Extension Project, the Committee members oversee the Stratford Mining Complex in accordance with the Department of Planning and Environment's 2019 Community Consultative Committee Guidelines for State Significant Projects. The mine's area of operation is a 1,500 ha site of former grazing land, east of The Bucketts Way and situated between the villages of Craven and Stratford.

The committee comprises:

- five local community representatives;
- two Mid Coast Council representatives (elected and staff);
- two Stratford Coal representatives, with attendance from other personnel as required;
- one independent Chairperson.

The Committee has maintained its quarterly meetings as the Stratford Extension Project progresses. The meetings are well attended and the members continue to be diligent in their representation of their local community. As stated in prior reporting, the CCC is comprised of long term community members and their knowledge is a valuable asset to the successful function of the committee. MidCoast Council staff and elected representatives also play an active role and form an integral conduit on local and regional matters. The combination of the two, together with the high standard of pre-meeting information reports and comprehensive presentations and accessibility by Stratford Coal personnel makes for an effective committee. A good rapport between all parties is self evident.

For the reporting period invited speakers were MidCoast Council's Director, Liveable Communities and the Coordinator, Community Strengthening to report on the allocation of community enhancement contributions paid to Council and Yancoal's Business Optimisation Manager for Stratford and Duralie operations to give updates on the Stratford Extension Project.

Other topics of discussion for the reporting period also included:

- general environmental management and monitoring, including air quality, noise, surface water and groundwater
- weeds, pest and pasture management
- community complaints

- broader community engagement and community enhancement contributions to Council and allocation thereof
- progress at the mine and the Stratford Extension Project including proposed road closures
- Rehabilitation progress
- Biodiversity offset strategy
- Successful Nest Box Program
- Yancoal land management, including rural leased lands
- Bushfire mitigation
- Post mining land use and mine closure planning
- Rocky Hill determination

2. CCC activities over last 12 months

- Committee meetings were held in the months of February, May, August and November 2019. The committee resumes its meeting schedule in February each year and will maintain a similar schedule as the previous year.
- Attendance at meetings is 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.
- Committee site tours during 2019 included the Avon North Open Cut, the Stratford East Open Cut Conservation Area and the Wenham Cox Road Diversion.
- No joint CCC meetings were held during the period, although the committee is appraised of Yancoal's sister operations at Duralie as the mine approaches end of life stages.
- In May, the Stratford Coal Family Day took place, over 500 people attended. The mine was open to invited guests, including the CCC members and families, mine employees and families and local community groups. The day was a great success and likely to be repeated in future years.

3. Key issues

At the August meeting, a request was received from Advance Gloucester, a local grassroots association formed in 2014 to promote and support activities for the betterment of the Gloucester area and the benefit of the general population. The request was for a controlled release of water from the Stratford East Dam to provide for drought relief to the downstream landholders suffering from the ongoing drought conditions. The original members of the CCC recalled this had occurred in the past and were au fait with the regulatory obligations which Stratford Coal must adhere to. The CCC discussed the potential approvals process that would be required to be met to accede to such a request and the pros and cons of the current situation. The matter was referred to the Government agencies; Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and the Environmental Protection Agency, for determination.

The CCC acknowledged that long term measures and strategic planning by Government was necessary to identify mine infrastructure that could provide assets for future water use, not only in this region but Statewide.

The Stratford CCC continues support for the long running Stratford Coal Education Program and the benefits it brings to the youth of the local community. It remains vigilant that the benefits of such funding, along with other community enhancement contributions and Yancoal Community Support Programs should flow through to those communities directly impacted by mining.

Staff from MidCoast Council 's annual report to the CCC on the allocation of community enhancement contributions has led to a much improved understanding of the process. Concerns raised by CCC members has instigated Council's review of its management practices and financial reporting back to the committee.

A survey of the committee members' views on the efficacy of the CCC revealed positive feedback:

"the Stratford CCC is productive, constructive and meeting its objectives".

"there are differing views on many matters discussed, there is no strongly adversarial character to the discussions".

"it hasn't always worked well ... it was a frustrating experience ... positive approach by staff and current management, a preparedness to discuss any matters reciprocated by the community representatives has led to a constructive committee".

"flexibility of discussions, rather than narrowly sticking to the order of business has prevailed".

"flexibility has led to more constructive engagement and exchange".

Issue	Actions Taken	Next Steps
Stratford Coal Education and Yancoal Community Support Programs	Actively support ongoing success of Stratford Coal Education Program and Stratford Coal Community Support through CCC networks and media.	Ongoing
Stratford Extension Project	Update management plans and include relevant changes to committee presentations for discussion at CCC meetings.	As and when required
Biodiversity and Conservation Areas information exchange	Liaise and share information with MidCoast Council	Integration of biodiversity connectivity projects with MidCoast Council planning. Ongoing


1. Focus for next 12 months

The planned activities for 2020 will continue to be guided by the contributions of the CCC members. These activities are likely to include:

- to investigate potential opportunities to increase agricultural land capability whilst meeting rehabilitation requirements
- interest in management of Yancoal owned land
- bush fire control
- interest in vegetation species used in rehabilitation and weed control.

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:	March 11 2020