

Stratford Coal Community Consultative Committee Annual Report for Year 2018

Community Consultative Committee Details

CCC / Project Name:	Stratford Coal Mining Complex	Reporting Period:	January - December 2018
Independent Chairperson:	Margaret MacDonald-Hill	Proponent Contact:	Michael Plain

1. Executive Summary

The Stratford Community Consultative Committee is a long established committee and commenced in 1995 as part of the Stratford Coal Mine Development Consent approval. With subsequent approval of the Stratford Extension Project, the Committee members, comprising some of the founding members, oversee the Stratford Mining Complex in accordance with the Department of Planning and Environment's 2016 Community Consultative Committee Guidelines for State Significant Projects. 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.

With the commencement of the Stratford Extension Project in April 2018, quarterly meetings were resumed during the reporting period. Prior to this time and because the operation was on 'care and maintenance', the CCC resolved to hold biennial meetings between third quarter 2015 to final quarter 2017.

The meetings are always well attended and the knowledge and commitment of the members is quite impressive as the committee is comprised of people with diverse backgrounds and interests, ranging from academic, professional, local residents and active stakeholders, each bringing a breadth of experience very valuable to the successful operation of the committee.

To add to this knowledge base, the committee regularly has invited guest speakers on topics of interest to the members. For the reporting period, these have included SLR Consulting to provide a better understanding on noise interpretation, monitoring and management, MidCoast Council's Community Coordinator and the Director of Community Spaces and Services, to speak on the Community Education Fund formerly administered by Gloucester Council and other allocation of community enhancement funds paid by Stratford Mine, and Yancoal's Business Optimisation Manager for Stratford and Duralie operations to give updates on the commencement of the Stratford Extension Project.

Other topics of discussion for the reporting period also included:

- general environmental management & 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
- Rehabilitation progress
- Biodiversity offset strategy
- Yancoal land management
- Post mining land use and mine closure planning
- Rocky Hill proposal.

The community members of the committee are diligent in their representative role on behalf of the community. 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.

Following the Local Government amalgamation of the Gloucester and Great Lakes Councils into MidCoast Council, both staff and elected representatives are active participants at each meeting, providing a much better understanding of Council's financial management and distribution of community enhancement contributions paid by Stratford Coal and insights into other Council matters.

Stratford Coal personnel maintain their high standard of pre-meeting information reports and comprehensive presentations to the committee. A good rapport exists amongst all members of the committee and as such, this committee functions well.

2. CCC activities over last 12 months

- Committee meetings were held in the months of February, May, August and November 2018. The committee resumes its meeting schedule in February 2019 and will maintain a similar schedule as in previous years.
- 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 2018 included the rehabilitated western co-disposal area, the Stratford main pit and reject emplacement area.
- No joint CCC meetings were held during the period, although the committee is apprised of Yancoal's sister operations at Duralie as the mine approaches end of life stages.
- Additional consultation activities included the SLR consultant's presentation to the May meeting in response to the committee's request for this to occur when mining operations recommenced on site.
- The heritage significance of the Craven Church and potential options for long term management were investigated at the request of the committee.
- Council informed the committee of the Local Land Services/DPI field day on agricultural land use mapping during February.

3. Key issues

The Stratford CCC is very supportive of the well known Stratford Coal Education Program now in its twenty fourth year 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.

MidCoast Council has presented a comprehensive report to the CCC and has undertaken to provide an annual report to the committee on the process and allocation of community enhancement contributions. In addressing concerns raised by CCC members, Council has now reviewed its management practices and financial reporting back to the committee.

Although not within its ambit, but certainly on its radar, CCC members' interest in the modification to allow the Rocky Hill proposal to progress and potential implications.

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

4. Focus for next 12 months

The planned activities for 2019 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
- 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:	February 18 2019