

Meeting Minutes

Stratford Coal Community Consultative Committee Meeting

Stratford Mine Site
Thursday 2nd May 2024

Attendees:

Ms Margaret MacDonald-Hill	CCC Chairperson	Cr Paul Sandilands	MidCoast Council
Thomas Kirkwood	Stratford Coal Pty Ltd	Ryan Fenning	MidCoast Council
John Cullen	Stratford Coal Pty Ltd	Kevin Lowrey	CCC Member
Jarrad Galvin	Stratford Coal Pty Ltd	Norm Bignell	CCC Member
James Hughes	Stratford Coal Pty Ltd	Richard Clarke	CCC Member
Graham Chase	Stratford Coal Pty Ltd	Anthony Berecny	CCC Member

1. Site Tour

Site tour undertaken prior to the meeting and included visiting the communication tower on top of pasture rehabilitation OMP emplacement area, Stratford East Pit and the Avon North Pit.

2. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair opened the meeting at 10:32 am and introduced:

Paul Sandilands – Councillor, MidCoast Council
 James Hughes – Environment & Community Advisor, Stratford Coal

Apologies: Cr Katheryn Smith, Philip Greenwood

3. Declaration of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

Ms MacDonald-Hill declared that she is the Independent Chair, appointed by the Secretary of the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
 The declarations of the Stratford CCC members remain current.

4. Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting

Noted that previous minutes contained spelling mistake (Michael).
 Moved by Mr Berecny; seconded by Mr Bignell.

5. Business Arising from Previous Meeting

Action	Status
Annual Action Item: MidCoast Council to provide an annual financial report each November on the spending of the Stratford Coal community enhancement contributions made to Council.	Next to be completed in November 2024
New Action Item 1: MidCoast Council to provide relevant documentation and plan regarding the use of SCPL water sources during dry periods	Mr Kirkwood advised he had received information from MCC last month and the matter would now be progressed internally.

6. Correspondence

Chair noted the correspondence log – no further discussion from committee.

7. Company Reports and Overview of Activities

SCPL presented the Company Reports and Overview of Activities:

1. Progress at the Mine: (refer to CCC presentation available on website for further detail)

Mr Cullen presented the Overview of Activities.

2. Environmental Reporting and Regulators: (refer to CCC presentation available on website for further detail)

Mr Kirkwood Presented the Overview of Environmental Reporting

3. Environmental Management and Monitoring: (refer to CCC presentation available on website for further detail)

Mr Kirkwood presented the Overview of Environmental Management and Reporting.

Mr Lowrey inquired how SCPL plans to manage weeds such as Parramatta Grass with most efforts focused on woody weeds. Mr Kirkwood explained that SCPL has a long-term plan which will see weeds such as Parramatta Grass shaded out by the growth of planted native trees and shrubs, but in the short term noted the challenges in controlling Parramatta Grass due to the ineffectiveness of traditional weed control methods in areas where juvenile native species are being planted.

4. Mine Closure Planning: (refer to CCC presentation available on website for further detail)

Mr Chase presented the overview of Mine Closure Planning.

Mr Berecny asked about the number of workers who are currently on-site and if that number is expected to remain, Mr Cullen stated there are approximately 60 workers and that number would be expected to stay consistent for the bulk shaping phase. Mr Berecny asked how many live in the Gloucester postcode, Mr Cullen said in previous years approximately 70% would have lived in the local area (including Dungog and towards the coast) and that it would be expected that number is still consistent among operators and the maintenance crews, with a larger proportion of staff commuting from the Newcastle and Hunter areas. Mr Chase also noted that as the site went through the various closure stages that the workforce numbers will fluctuate with local personnel as available and specialists from outside of the Gloucester area.

Mr Berecny and Mr Lowrey both expressed that with the closure of the mine, it does not have to be the end of the town and local workers can move into employment opportunities within other existing industries such as farm work.

Mr Berecny queried at what stage would the diversion drains be removed, Mr Chase explained that the definite timeline for integrating rehabilitated land back into the catchment is not yet known as there will be a number of criteria required to be met, but based on the current proposed timeline that would be around 2030. Mr Berecny asked if the bunds and diversions around the pits will remain, which Mr Chase informed him run-off will continue to be diverted away from the pits post closure.

5. Community Complaints: (refer to CCC presentation available on website for further detail)

Mr Kirkwood provided the overview of Community Complaints.

6. Community Programs: (refer to CCC presentation available on website for further detail)

Mr Kirkwood provided the overview of Community Programs. Mr Kirkwood outlined the success of the recent Community Support Fund Presentation Night and recent Sydney Youth Orchestra performance at Gloucester High School. Mr Berecny asked how the performance was arranged and if Yancoal had a part in bringing the Orchestra to the town. Mr Galvin stated that it was able to be arranged through Learning for Good which Yancoal and Sydney Youth Orchestra are both partnered.

Mr Kirkwood informed the group that Yancoal had also partnered with the BroSpeak Program at Gloucester High School where Mr Galvin was a facilitator of the program. Mr Galvin provided an overview of the program to the group.

7. Stratford Renewable Energy Hub Update: (refer to CCC presentation available on website for further detail)

SCPL provided the overview of Stratford Renewable Energy Hub Update.

Mr Lowrey asked if the Social Assessment considered workers accommodation needs, Mr Kirkwood stated this will continue to be considered during the feasibility process. Mr Clarke inquired about the recent SREH community engagement sessions, specifically inquiring if the local people are in support of the project. Mr Kirkwood stated that generally the feedback was positive from the sessions. Mr Galvin reiterated Mr Kirkwood's statement and added that there were some specific areas where requests for additional information and concerns were raised. Mr Galvin also stated that when the Environmental Impact Statement goes on public exhibition there will be opportunity for further comments from the community.

Mr Lowrey asked what size is the reduction in the solar area. Mr Kirkwood noted that the panels in direct line of sight when travelling on the Bucketts Way have now been removed and there will be further room for visual barriers for the retained panels.

8. General Business

Mr Fenning thanked SCPL for the Council staff site tour on the 11th of April, which allowed Council staff to see the mining operation prior to last coal.

Mr Clarke expressed concerns with solar and questioned viability of the solar farm during times of excess solar when you can buy energy from the grid for a much lower cost. Mr Kirkwood stated that the purpose of the solar farm is primarily to power the pumped hydro project. Mr Clarke raised concerns with the use of ex-Isaac's property for solar, noting the value of the land for agriculture use.

Cr Sandilands asked where plants for the offset areas are sourced, noting Council does have nurseries. Mr Kirkwood stated in the past, securing adequate and quality supply has been an issue and currently plants are sourced from a nursery in the Hunter and by the Gloucester Worimi First Peoples Aboriginal Corporation. Mr Kirkwood also noted that SCPL is invested in seeing the Gloucester Worimi First People Corporation becoming a reliable supplier of plants in the Gloucester region.

9. Proposed Meeting Schedule

The Chair noted the next meeting would be held on the 8th August 2024, as previously planned. She suggested the Committee members might like to consider a reduction of the meetings to twice a year, once coal extraction had ceased, anticipated mid this year and noting that each member could request an extraordinary meeting if deemed necessary. For further discussion at the August meeting.

Mr Lowrey asked if further updates would be available for the SREH if meetings are reduced, Mr Kirkwood stated future information sessions and published updates are planned and continued that the proposed SREH will be its own project which is outside of the scope of the Stratford Coal CCC.

2024 proposed meeting dates:

- 8th August 2024
- 14th November 2024

Meeting closed at: 11:22 am

Summary of Action Items from this meeting

1. ***Annual Action Item:*** *MidCoast Council to provide an annual financial report each November on the spending of the Stratford Coal community enhancement contributions made to Council.*