

Abel Coal Community Consultative Committee Annual Report for Year 2019

Community Consultative Committee Details

CCC / Project Name:	Abel Coal Mine	Reporting Period:	January to December 2019
Independent Chairperson:	Margaret MacDonald-Hill	Proponent Contact:	Phillip Brown

1. Executive Summary

The Abel Community Consultative Committee was established in 2007 as a consent condition of the Minister for Planning's June 2007 approval of the project. Abel Mine is an underground coal mine located approximately twenty three kilometres north west of Newcastle and bounded roughly to the south by John Renshaw Drive and George Booth Drive, west of Buttai Creek and east of the M1 Expressway, mostly within the Cessnock Local Government area. Abel uses the adjoining Bloomfield Coal Handling Preparation Plant, however as the mine has been on care and maintenance since early May 2016, no mining operations have taken place during then or for the reporting period.

The Abel Mine Committee operates in accordance with the Department of Planning and Environment's 2019 Community Consultative Committee Guidelines for State Significant Projects. The Committee is currently comprised of:

- four local community representatives;
- a representative from Cessnock City Council;
- a representative from Bloomfield Colliery
- two Abel Coal representatives: the Environmental and Community Relations Superintendent and the Operations Manager, with attendance from other personnel as required;
- one independent Chairperson.

The Committee meetings are held biannually whilst the mine remains on care and maintenance. Community representatives' attendance at meeting is consistently high as all members are involved in their local community and environment.

At each meeting the committee is briefed on a vast array of topics of interest, together with a Powerpoint presentation sent out in advance of meetings. For the reporting period this included mine subsidence issues; discussions with Subsidence Advisory NSW relating to road repairs and property subsidence management reports, feral animal management, bushfire management including proposed controlled Rural Fire Service hazard reductions, Council representation, the closure of the Donaldson Conservation Trust, current status of operations and proposed development of adjoining land. The committee also discussed, but not limited to:

- general environmental management & monitoring, including air quality, noise, surface water, groundwater, flora and fauna.
- metrological monitoring
- water management and dam monitoring

- sub-tropical rainforest monitoring
- community complaints
- future mining operations
- Mindaribba Aboriginal Land Council membership

The good rapport continues amongst all parties and extends beyond meetings. As stated in previous reporting, the committee members have remained constant since the CCC's inception, providing a well informed and diverse group of people, working together as a competent committee.

2. CCC activities over last 12 months

- Committee meetings were held in March and September 2019.
- Attendance at meetings is consistent with previous years.
- Mindaribba Aboriginal Land Council (Mindaribba ALC), having expressed an interest in attending a meeting, were invited and subsequently attended the September meeting. An invitation was extended to the CEO to join the committee.
- There were no site visits undertaken for the reporting period.
- No joint Committee meetings were held, although the Environmental Advisor from the Bloomfield Colliery is a member of the committee.

3. Key issues

Abel Mine continues on care and maintenance and consequently, there are no key issues at this time. The committee maintains an interest in Subsidence Advisory NSW processes.

The future of the Abel Mine and development of the surrounding area also continues to be of interest to the committee.

Issue	Actions Taken	Next Steps
Signage and condition of Black Hill Road	Raised at CCC meetings. Liaison between Abel, Cessnock Council and Subsidence Advisory NSW.	Ongoing coordination between parties.
Closure of Donaldson Conservation Trust	CCC request for summary and allocation of funds to be provided.	Information provided to September 2019 meeting.
Expression of interest from Mindaribba ALC	CEO attended September meeting. Mindaribba ALC invited to join CCC. Membership application sent to Mindaribba ALC.	Awaiting formal submission from Mindaribba to be sent to DPIE


4. Focus for next 12 months

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

- review of ongoing environmental monitoring.
- operations and future mining potential.
- development of surrounding land in vicinity of the Abel leases.

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 8 2020