

Abel Coal Community Consultative Committee Annual Report for Year 2020

Community Consultative Committee Details

CCC / Project Name:	Abel Coal Mine	Reporting Period:	January to December 2020
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 since that time.

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, with attendance from other personnel as required;
- one independent Chairperson.

The Committee meetings continue to be held biannually whilst the mine remains on care and maintenance. Despite Covid-19 restrictions, normal committee meetings were held on site, in accordance with all necessary Government and site requirements. Community representatives' attendance is consistently high, as in previous years.

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 and subsequent speed limit and road repairs, feral animal control, bushfire management including delays with proposed controlled Rural Fire Service hazard reductions because of dry weather conditions, consequential elevated dust levels and the reporting of same to the regulators. The committee also discussed, the following:

- general environmental management and monitoring, including air quality, noise, surface water, groundwater, flora and fauna
- property update and illegal access prevention
- future mining operations
- updated Mine Operations Plan and Mine Closure
- metrological monitoring

- water management and dam monitoring
- installation of water hydrant at Abel upcast shaft
- community complaints
- Mindaribba Aboriginal Land Council membership

A 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. The trend of no community complaints over many years validates the efficacy of the committee.

2. CCC activities over last 12 months

- Committee meetings were held in March and September 2020.
- There were no site visits undertaken for the reporting period.
- No joint Committee meetings were held, the Environmental Advisor from the Bloomfield Colliery remains 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.
Expression of interest from Mindaribba ALC	CEO attended September 2019 meeting. Mindaribba ALC invited to join CCC. Membership application sent to Mindaribba ALC.	In abeyance until further advice received from Mindaribba.
Mine closure strategy	Committee requested a briefing on the draft MOP and Mine Closure Strategy	Included in presentation at September meeting. Update to be provided to March 2021 meeting.


4. Focus for next 12 months

The planned activities for 2021 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
- mine closure strategy and 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:	March 10 2021