

Mount Pleasant Project

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Students get green thumbs at Mount Pleasant site



Year 7 science students from Muswellbrook High School recently had a unique hands-on experience at the Mount Pleasant Project site.

The students donned gardening gloves and helped plant native tree seedlings, which when fully grown will screen the mine workings from an access road.

The students were also given a guided walk through a Box-Gum Grassy Woodland

community, which is an important ecosystem on the site.

"The tree planting gave students a chance to create their very own Woodland Community. We hope they will come back and monitor its growth over time," Leah Cook, Environmental Specialist for Coal & Allied's Mount Pleasant Project said.

For more information about Box-Gum Grassy Woodlands, see story on page 3.

From the General Manager Studies

Mount Pleasant Project feasibility study update



I hope 2008 has started on a positive note for you, and has included time to relax with family and friends over the Christmas break.

In case you are driving during busy holiday periods, please play it safe and be aware

of the environment you are driving in. Traffic, roadworks, weather conditions, wildlife and unfamiliar roads can all be hazardous, especially at night.

Looking back on 2007, it was a big year for the Mount Pleasant Project. The Coal & Allied team continued its work on the feasibility study, and is now in the process of putting together the information gathered. We look forward to updating you on the project as more details become available.

Meanwhile, please drop in to our Bridge Street office in Muswellbrook to learn more about the project and to contact us with any questions, suggestions or concerns about our activities.

Antony Bijok
General Manager Studies
Mount Pleasant Project

Fact File

Location:	Three kilometres west of Muswellbrook
Lease size:	3,985 hectares
Ownership:	100 per cent Coal & Allied
Product:	Thermal coal for export markets
Production:	10.5 mtpa Run of Mine
Reserves:	462 million tonnes
Development Consent granted:	December 1999
Feasibility Phase:	Commenced November 2006
Construction	
Duration:	2.5 years
Employment:	Approximately 700 at peak
Proposed Operations	
Duration:	The Development Consent permits operations until 2020
Employment:	340
Mining type:	Combination dragline and truck and excavator
Infrastructure:	Coal handling preparation plant Rail loop Office and workshop complex
Mining equipment:	Dragline Excavators Truck fleet Ancillary equipment



Muswellbrook Mayor Cr John Colvin briefs local businesses

Commerce and Industry breakfast briefing

There was a strong turnout of Muswellbrook's business community to the Mount Pleasant Project office in October.

A breakfast briefing was held at the premises for the Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce and Industry to hear the latest on the project.

Muswellbrook Council Mayor, Cr John Colvin, also used the occasion to launch the council's mobile Sustainability Exhibition Trailer.

Coal & Allied's General Manager Studies, Antony Bijok, provided an update on the Mount Pleasant

Project. Other speakers included the Hunter Region Business Enterprise Centre's Rod Doherty, and Richard Hogan, of Wesley Uniting Employment, whose Work for the Dole programme participants constructed the Sustainability Exhibition Trailer.

On the day, attendees enjoyed a breakfast cooked by the Apex Club and donated generously to the club's garden project at the Muswellbrook Hospital.

Coal & Allied also showed its support for the project with a cash donation of \$1,500.



History of Mount Pleasant

1992	Authorisation to Prospect granted
1992 – 1997	Exploration, Mine Planning and Environmental Studies
Sep 1997	Environmental Impact Statement completed
1998 – 1999	Commission of Inquiry
Dec 1999	Development Consent granted
2001	Order of Magnitude Study
2002 – 2006	Pre-Feasibility Studies
Nov 2004	First Community Consultative Committee (CCC) meeting
Nov 2004	Construction of dam on site
Aug 2005	Project Options Study commenced
Nov 2006	Feasibility Study announced
Apr 2007	Muswellbrook Office opened
Nov 2007	Stage 3 tree planting completed
Dec 2007	EMP Focus Group sessions held

About us

In late 2006, Coal & Allied announced the start of the feasibility study into the development of the Mount Pleasant Project near Muswellbrook.

The Mount Pleasant Project is 100 per cent owned by Coal & Allied. Coal & Allied is listed on the Australian Stock Exchange and is 75 per cent owned by Rio Tinto. It is managed by Rio Tinto Coal Australia.

In 2007, Coal & Allied produced 24 million tonnes of coal. Coal & Allied has a workforce of more than 2,500 people across its three operations – Bengalla, Hunter Valley Operations and Mount Thorley Warkworth.

Feasibility to decision

Feasibility Study:

- ✓ Confirm mine design
- ✓ Confirm infrastructure
- ✓ Review environmental studies
- ✓ Estimate capital expenses
- ✓ Determine economic value

Next steps:

- Collate all information gathered in the study
- Ensure sufficient coal chain infrastructure is in place to support development
- Optimise capital costs
- Investigate skills shortage management options
- Obtain Mining Lease
- Obtain Environmental Protection Licence
- Obtain construction and operating licences
- Prepare Environmental Management Plans

Ongoing:

- Acquire land
- Community consultation
- Review project against sustainable development principles – social, economic and environmental

Thank you

to the Muswellbrook Regional Art Gallery which assisted with the loan of chairs for the Chamber of Commerce and Industry breakfast meeting held in the Coal & Allied office on Bridge Street in October.

Focus groups contribute to environmental management plans



The December Environmental Management Plan focus groups were well attended

Coal & Allied would like to thank those who participated in the focus groups held in early December to help develop Environmental Management Plans for the Mount Pleasant Project.

Local landowners, community members, interest groups, government bodies and key stakeholders took part in five groups to discuss plans covering issues such as the management of land, flora and fauna, water, erosion, soil stripping, life of mine planning, landscaping, air quality, noise, blasting, archaeology and cultural heritage.

Coal & Allied is required to develop the plans as part of its Development Consent conditions. The focus groups were held to seek input into these plans and to take advantage of local knowledge and expertise.

The input was extremely valuable. Updates will be provided to participants as the plans are developed in early 2008, before being presented to the Mount Pleasant Project Community Consultative Committee members (see page 4) and the Muswellbrook Council's Environmental Committee. The focus groups will meet again in early February to consider the draft plans.

Further details can be obtained from Leah Cook, Environmental Specialist, at the Mount Pleasant office.

Box-Gum Grassy Woodland facts

Students learn about a Box-Gum Grassy Woodland community on Coal & Allied land

Did you know?

- Box-Gum Grassy Woodlands once dominated south-eastern Australia, but are now one of the most poorly conserved ecosystems in the country.
- Trees are the most prominent features of the woodlands.
- Most of the plant diversity is at ground level. In between the grasses, a wide range of herbs, lilies and orchids can be found on good sites.
- Birds and other animals rely on the woodlands for foraging, shelter and breeding.
- Box-Gum Grassy Woodlands have been reduced to widely scattered remnants of varying size, quality and ownership due to past land practices.
- Regeneration of degraded areas is possible with appropriate management.
- Box-Gum Grassy Woodlands are listed as an endangered ecological community.
- We have identified Box-Gum Grassy Woodlands communities at the Mount Pleasant site and we are collating various studies before seeking advice from relevant government authorities about mitigation strategies and options for managing this important ecological community.

Congratulations

to the Hunter Region Business Enterprise Centre, which was recognised by its peers as the best Regional Enterprise Centre in Australia in October 2007. The Centre has a local presence in Coal & Allied's Mount Pleasant Project office in Muswellbrook.

Coal & Allied Community Trust update



Wildlife Aid caring for sick and orphaned native animals in the Upper Hunter

2007 projects included:

- Funding for four community grants officer roles in the Singleton, Cessnock, Muswellbrook and Upper Hunter Shire Councils to help local community groups and businesses apply for government and private support for their work. \$825,000.
- Supporting Wildlife Aid's existing care for sick, orphaned and injured native animals, and to provide ten new carers with essential provisions to further expand their work. \$54,000.
- The Hunter Training Initiative which will match up to 60 Year 11 students with employers, enabling students to learn essential skills and gain work experience in a desired skill area. \$376,000.
- Continued support for the Hunter Region Business Enterprise Centre to provide professional, free and confidential business advice. \$102,300.
- Helping young people learn literacy skills with the "Let's Read" initiative in Cessnock. "Let's Read" involves one-to-one training with parents to expand their understanding of the importance of reading with young children. \$20,000.

The 2007 Coal & Allied Community Trust Annual Report is available at www.coalandallied.com.au

In 2007, Coal & Allied funded 15 community partnership initiatives in the Hunter Valley totalling more than \$1.5 million.

It is the eighth year of the Coal & Allied Community Trust, in which time we have spent more than:

- \$3.2 million on local business enhancement projects
- \$1.3 million on academic programmes
- \$1 million on vocational training
- \$400,000 on personal development and
- \$785,000 on environmental projects.

Aboriginal Development Programme delivers

The Coal & Allied Aboriginal Development Consultative Committee is really pushing up the run rate – just ask aspiring young Hunter Valley cricketer Duncan Paget.

The Aboriginal teenager's dream to play for Australia moved a step closer this year, thanks to the Committee's funding of \$6,000 to cover his participation in the Emerging Blues under 16s programme, which is run by Cricket NSW as a talent identification process.

In 2007 the Committee provided more than \$185,000 to many initiatives in the Hunter region, such as:

- \$4,000 to Scone, Muswellbrook and Merriwa High Schools to enable them to take a group of Indigenous students to Croc Fest 2007 in Dubbo
- \$52,000 to Ungooroo Aboriginal Corporation in Singleton to enable them to continue to provide a wide range of community development and support services
- \$15,000 to Upper Hunter High Schools for initiatives to encourage 'at risk' students to remain at school and develop skills to help them get jobs.

Coal & Allied Aboriginal Relations Specialist Cate Sims said: "The projects help support a variety of initiatives from assisting sportsmen like Duncan, to improving education, employment and training opportunities while helping to preserve and promote unique Aboriginal traditions and culture."



Young cricketer Duncan Paget gets assistance from Coal & Allied

CCC Members visit coal handling and preparation plant



Mount Pleasant's Community Consultative Committee (CCC) members have been given a glimpse of what the project could look like.

Members recently visited Coal & Allied's Mount Thorley Warkworth mine near Singleton.

Plant Manager Nick Earner and Supervisor Ron McWilliams spoke to the group about the processes used in the plant to convert extracted coal into a saleable product free of dirt and clay and which meets customers' specifications.

CCC members learn about the workings of a coal handling and preparation plant.

The CCC members were also given an overview of the site environmental and safety controls, and also got to see how water was recycled to minimise consumption. The similarities and differences to the proposed Mount Pleasant design were discussed during the tour. The Mount Pleasant CCC and Project Team are very grateful to Nick and Ron for making the visit possible.

Mount Pleasant Community Consultative Committee

Cr John Douglas (Chair)	22 Skellatar Street, Muswellbrook 2333	65 433128
Chris Gidney	Muswellbrook Shire Council PO Box 122, Muswellbrook 2333	65 493770
Jim Loneragan	"Marylands" Kayuga Road, Kayuga 2333	65 431934
Trevor Parkinson	71 Brecht Street, Muswellbrook 2333	65 432445
Kenneth Weekes	"Mirrabooka" 1071 Castlerock Road, Muswellbrook 2333	65 479212
Pat Watts	"Warrabee" 186 Castlerock Road, Muswellbrook 2333	65 431782

Coal & Allied Representatives

Antony Bijok	General Manager Studies	65 490504
Leah Cook	Environmental Specialist	65 490503
Jen Bowcock	Community Relations Officer	65 490506

Mount Pleasant Project Team

- **Antony Bijok**, General Manager Studies
antony.bijok@rtca.riotinto.com.au
- **Robin Herringe**, Study Manager
robin.herringe@rtca.riotinto.com.au
- **Richard Bailey**, Mining Manager
richard.bailey@rtca.riotinto.com.au
- **Dion Lucke**, Manager Coal Chain and Services
dion.lucke@rtca.riotinto.com.au
- **Leah Cook**, Environment Specialist
leah.cook@rtca.riotinto.com.au
- **Jen Bowcock**, Community Relations Officer
jennifer.bowcock@rtca.riotinto.com.au

**Mount Pleasant Project
Muswellbrook Office
19 Bridge Street, Muswellbrook**

Freecall: 1800 727 745

Email: community.relations@rtca.riotinto.com.au

Website: www.coalandallied.com.au