

## Mount Pleasant Project Community Consultative Committee

### Minutes of Meeting Held 5 March 2009

**Present:**

Karen Portolan	Chair – Muswellbrook Shire Council – Councilor
Jennifer Lecky	Muswellbrook Shire Council – Councilor
Trevor Parkinson	Community Representative
Tim Troon	Community Representative
Ken Weekes	Community Representative
Patricia Watts	Community Representative
Chris Gidney	Director Environmental Services - Muswellbrook Shire Council (MSC)
Antony Bijok	Coal & Allied General Manager – Project Studies
Richard Bailey	Coal & Allied Manager Mining – Project Studies
Leah Cook	Coal & Allied Environment Specialist
Jennifer Bowcock	Coal & Allied Community Relations Specialist

**Guest Speaker:**

Dr Maurice Harden – Occupational Physician.  
Hunter Industrial Medicine  
Ph: 02 4944 6599  
maurice@industrialmedicine.com.au

**Minute Taker:**

Laura Harkins                      Coal & Allied Community Relations - Graduate

- 1. Meeting Opened at 1pm:** Chairperson: Cr Karen Portolan opened the meeting and welcomed Timothy Troon as a new Community Representative.
- 2. Emergency Procedures and Housekeeping:** Presented by Leah Cook. Leah indicated the three emergency exits, the top car park emergency muster point and toilets. If using the front exit for emergencies, please do not use the side path but walk around the block on the high side and meet in the top car park.
- 3. Apologies:** Nil
- 4. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest:** No interests declared.
- 5. Business Arising from the Minutes**

**Previous meeting actions:** Craig Flemming (MSC) was provided the requested sustainable development information regarding the RTCA Clermont Preferred Futures Project.

Investigations were made regarding the New Inventors weed control invention. The Weeds Authority have inspected MTP land and concluded that current practices of weed removal have been effective.

Chris Gidney: Thank you for arranging the excellent site inspection of HVO rehabilitation and forestry trial last meeting – congratulations. Council is impressed by what can be achieved.

Jennifer Lecky: Seconded Chris's sentiment and noted that this trial has been raised in a range of forums.

If CCC members require any further information regarding the alluvial lands rehabilitation or the NSW Forestry trial please ask as CNA would be happy to assist. A further site inspection could also be arranged upon request.

6. **Confirmation of Minutes:** *Motion:* The minutes of the previous meeting held 11 November 2008 are accepted. *Moved:* Jennifer Lecky, *Seconded:* Ken Weekes

7. **Community Representative Feedback:** Nil

8. **Project Update – Anthony Bijok**

RTCA has made changes to their growth plans given the current economic climate and reviews of process and resourcing are being undertaken in all sections of Rio Tinto. CNA has new a managing director so there is further opportunity to review the future growth projects for the business. Access/capacity restraints to port and rail remain unresolved and this issue continues to be a constraint to the development of MTP.

Planned activities for 2009 include:

- Muswellbrook shop front will continue to provide a point of contact for our community
- Continued environmental monitoring
- Management of Box Gum Woodland
- Continued land management, including weed control, visual screen planting and property leasing.

Chris Gidney: Is the current development of the Bengalla Link Road affecting the timing of development of MTP?

Richard Bailey: Currently this road development is not negatively affecting the timing of MTP. Further work would be required by MTP to link into the new road. The link road will assist with access to MTP.

Karen Portolan: Are the delays to the project start negatively affecting property acquisition processes; is it causing any concerns to local landowners?

Antony Bijok: CNA owns 90% of the land required for the MTP. There are some further acquisitions that will be negotiated as the owners make request to sell.

Tim Troon: Will the port expansions mean greater port capacity and assurance for MTP development? Does CNA negotiate port capacity as a whole or as individual mines?

Antony Bijok: Coal & Allied mines (HVO, MTW and BMC) are owned by different joint venture partners. While there are some opportunities for group sharing of coal and port capacity, ownership arrangements have meant that the mines have each nominated individually.

The new port (NCIG) that is under construction is not required to provide access to all producers, and the owners of this facility are not required to give up their existing allocations at the current ports (Kooragang and Carrington). Work is currently underway for long term solution. An update on infrastructure will be provided later in the meeting.

**9. Land Management – Richard Bailey**

Completion of weeding (Boxthorn) in response to action items following Upper Hunter Weeds Authority inspections in 2008. The Authority will reinspect later in 2009. Boxthorn weeding is now focussed on removing the plant in total, not merely poisoning it. Other efforts to tackle boxthorn continue, in conjunction with CNA licensees/former owners, with good progress on investigating different spray types.

Ongoing discussions with MSC regarding CNA assuming from Council the maintenance of minor Council roads within the CNA land footprint, where largely used only by CNA. Primarily, Skippens Lane and potentially others. These arrangements would extend for the period until CNA acquired the Crown road in the normal manner.

Ongoing property management – monitoring fencing, bush fire preparedness and routine property maintenance.

Chris Gidney: Do any private landowners access their properties via Skippens Lane?

Richard Bailey: Skippens Lane is still a public road however all the land surrounding this is now owned by Coal & Allied. CNA Leasees may use this lane to access land.

Chris Gidney: Given land ownership it may therefore be worth applying to Council to close Skippens Lane.

**10. Guest Speaker – Dr Maurice Harden – Air Quality, Mining and Health Impacts. See also attached information**

Dr Harden is an occupational health physician. Rio Tinto introduced health standards for all operations to implement and Dr Harden was engaged by CNA to provide technical advice. From a doctor's perspective the Rio Tinto standards are very impressive.

Lung disease can be classified into three groups:

1. Diseases of the airways
2. Diseases of the gaseous exchange
3. Tumours (other) growths

Recently diseases of the airways (notably asthma, which is a constriction of the airways) have been gaining community interest and local media attention. There are hundreds of known triggers for asthma. Dust from mining is not a recognized trigger and while theoretically possible it is not likely. While asthma rates are an emotive issue the University of Newcastle seems not particularly interested at this time in undertaking further research as there is limited evidence to support the need for research.

Coal Services Health has been undertaking health checks of employees in the Hunter for over 20 years. These checks have shown that respiratory related diseases in miners have been decreasing in recent years. It would be expected that miners would be the first group to display any concerns. With the introduction of the Rio Tinto Health Standards CNA has been undertaking comprehensive health monitoring for employees.

From a medical perspective, if there was a problem with people living in the general vicinity of coal mines then we should see increased rates of lung diseases compared to the general population. Current data shows no justification to consider that living in the Hunter increases risk of respiratory disease (see attached information). Despite the issue being reported in the media there is no evidence in the new cases reported in statistics.

Jennifer Lecky: There has been much discussion about the monitoring of PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> and setting limits. This seems to have stalled in recent times. What is the link to health impact?

Dr Harden: Medical literature does not break down cases caused by the PM<sub>2.5</sub> fraction. Medically we are generally only concerned with the respirable fraction (less than 7 micrograms) and in the outcome or new cases caused by exposure. Medical statistics are not showing a differentiation based on fraction size. It is possible that the very fine dust does not cause lung disease as it is too small to become lodged but there is limited research and need has not warranted such research.

Chris Gidney: We have all heard about the impact of acid rain to say farmer's fencing. What is the health risk of acid rain?

Dr Harden: Health risk is related to dose. If you are exposed to a dose that is too much it may kill you, if not enough you will be OK. Rainwater is weakly acidic but risk is related to dose (exposure x concentration).

Trevor Parkinson: Health monitoring statistics may not be accurate as employees may not speak out if there is a medical problem for fear of retribution.

Dr Harden: The Coal Services Board undertakes employee health monitoring checks every 3 years. These checks include lung function tests, clinical examinations and periodic chest x-rays. Therefore if there were cases of respiratory diseases we would see it through the statistics.

Antony Bijok: Is there a difference in rates of disease between underground and surface miners? Note that CNA does not have any underground operations in NSW.

Dr Harden: The monitoring programs are much the same between underground and surface mining with personal dust gauge monitoring. There does not appear any change in the rates or incidence of lung disease between these groups of people but data is still being analysed.

Leah Cook Mines have conditions in their Development Consent and Environment Protection License relating to amenity criteria for air quality. It should be noted that these limits are amenity not health limits, with amenity criteria much more stringent than levels that are likely to cause health concern.

Dr Harden left the meeting

## 11. Environmental Performance Update - Leah Cook

Highlights from the 2008 AEMR were presented. All members of the CCC had received a copy of the AEMR prior to the meeting. Feedback was sought regarding the format and content of the report.

Trevor Parkinson: The AEMR is a pretty good report. The MTP newsletters could be improved by having the date of issue/publication in the footer of each page.

Karen Portolan: The format of the AEMR is easy to read and logical. I can understand the reason for undertaking the monitoring and improved understanding of the mine. Consider including a layman's summary for each section and definition of technical terms.

Jennifer Lecky: I have read several AEMRs this year. I will provide further comments after full review (**Action**).

## 12. Hunter Valley Coal Chain Update: Richard Bailey

- Capacity Allocation System

The ACCC has authorised a short term tonnage allocation system thru to 30th June 09

The authorisation is conditional on an Implementation Memorandum that sets out an agreed long term framework and implementation plan being submitted to the ACCC by 31st March 09

- Port Capacity

PWCS expansion from 102 Mt/y to 113 Mt/y should be complete in mid 2009

PWCS has development approval for further expansion to 145 Mt/y and has expansion studies underway

NCIG Stage 1 (30 Mt/y) is expected to be operational in 2010

NCIG has approval to expand to 66 Mt/y

- Rail Capacity

ARTC completed several projects in 2008, including the Antiene to Grasstree duplication, modifications to the Muswellbrook yard, signalling upgrades on Ulan and Gunnedah lines, and loop extensions on Ulan and Gunnedah lines

ARTC projects expected to be completed in 2009 include St Heliers to Muswellbrook duplication and bidirectional signalling upgrades

ARTC has an ongoing pipeline of proposed infrastructure investments

Chris Gidney: How does this affect passenger rail movements?

Richard Bailey: Passenger rail slots are set first when arranging rail logistics. Some of the improvements by ARTC are designed to allow passenger and bulk rail movements to co-exist effectively, for instance the fly-over at Sandgate.

Tim Troon: Is there a chance that MTP may never go ahead?

Antony Bijok: MTP has all the characteristics of wanted new development with low strip ratios and good quality coal.

**13. Community Relations - Jen Bowcock**

Coal & Allied shopfronts: Muswellbrook -19 Bridge Street and Singleton -127 John Street. These shopfronts are continually evolving with them being used by community partners, Chamber of Commerce, BEC, ADCC and Community Trust.

A Community Information Line - Freecall 1800 727 745

The CNA website has general information about the business but also includes the CCC minutes, newsletter and other public reports for MTP: [www.coalandallied.com.au](http://www.coalandallied.com.au)

Community Newsletter – Issue 6 is being compiled currently and will be issued to all households in Muswellbrook and Aberdeen and our stakeholder database.

CNA is again participating with other mines in the Bursting with Energy Expo- Friday 27 + Saturday 28 March. Questacon are presenting again and the local schools have been invited to attend.

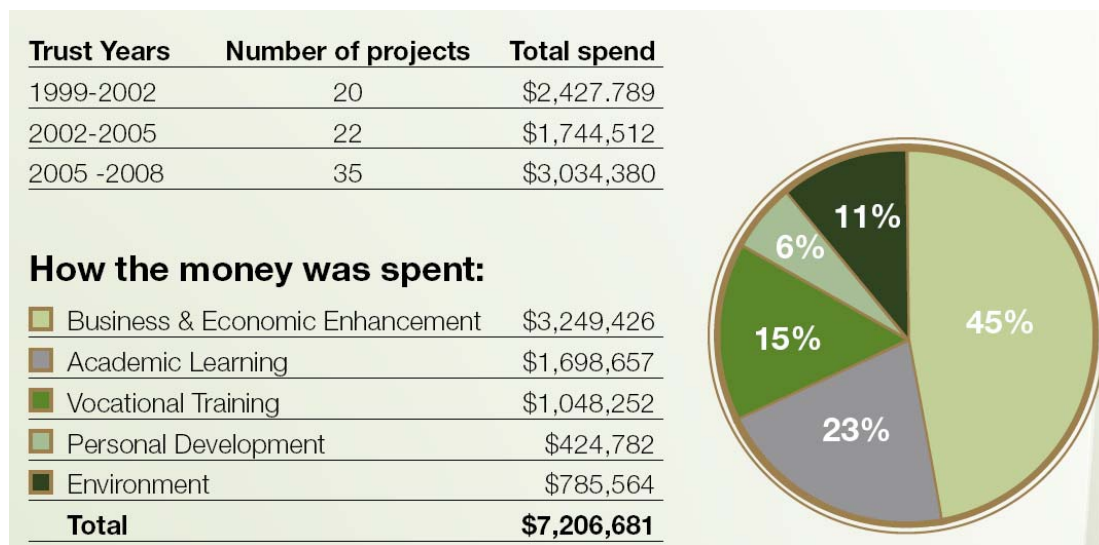
- **Community Trust Fund**

\$7.2 million invested across local communities in 77 projects since 1999.

The Trust focuses on the geographical areas of Maitland, Cessnock, Singleton, Muswellbrook and Upper Hunter LGA's.

Priorities include community economic, social, educational and environmental outcomes.

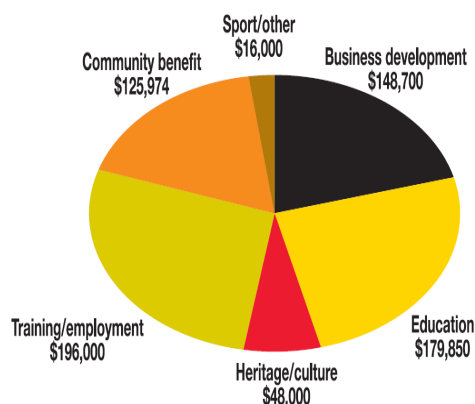
A further commitment of \$3 million for 2009 – 2011 announced. The first meeting will be held on 31 March 2009.



- **The Aboriginal Development Consultative Committee**

The ADCC focuses on projects based in the Singleton, Muswellbrook and Upper Hunter LGA's. The first meeting for this year will be held on 10 March 2009.

**Total funding provided  
by category as of August 2008**



#### 14. General Business

Leah Cook

Seeking input into what issues the CCC would like to learn more about so we can arrange future guest speakers or excursions. Some suggestions may include Waste Management – a trip to Thiess' Thornton waste transfer station, Environmental monitoring, MTP site inspection, western road strategy – Link Road.

Karen Portolan:

I would be interested in the environmental monitoring. If we can see the different equipment and the lab...

Tim Troon:

I would like to familiarize myself with the site, e.g. the location of the pits, CHPP etc.

Trevor Parkinson:

Do other sites have CCCs? Would there be any value in meeting with other members?

Leah Cook:

All CNA mine sites (HVO, BMC and MTW) operate a CCC as required by their Development Consent. MSC is involved in the MTP and BMC CCCs and Singleton Council is involved in the HVO and MTW CCCs.

It was agreed that CNA would arrange for a site inspection in the July meeting and focus on Environmental Monitoring in the November CCC. **(Action)**

#### 15. Date and time of next meeting

**Date:** Thursday 1pm, 12 July.

**Venue:** 19 Bridge Street Muswellbrook.

**Proposed dates for remainder of 2009:**

12 July 1pm (MTP site inspection)

5 November 1pm (Environmental Monitoring)

**Meeting closed:** Meeting closed at 3pm by Cr Karen Portolan.