

## **Minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Maules Creek Coal Community Consultative Committee**

**Meeting Held:** 7<sup>th</sup> June 2013, 9:30am

**Venue:** Maules Creek Coal, Finance Office Boardroom, Boggabri

Prior to commencement of the meeting, Daniel Martin advised that Mr John Turner had been approved by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure as an Independent Chair for the Maules Creek Coal Community Consultative Committee.

**Present:** Mr John Turner, Chair for CCC  
Mr Rod Woolford, Community Rep  
Mr Peter Watson, Community Rep  
Clr Lloyd Finlay, Narrabri Shire Rep  
Mr Daniel Martin, Environment & Heritage Manager  
Mr Craig Simmons, Area Manager Services  
Mr Brian Cole, Executive General Manager – Project Delivery  
Ms Kelly Browning, Work Health & Safety Officer

**Apologies:** Mr Jason Davis, Community Rep  
Ms Carolyn Nancarrow, Community Rep  
Ms Toni Comber, Community Rep  
Mr Chris Andrew, Community Rep

### **1. Introductions**

Daniel Martin gave thanks to the persons past and present of the land in which we meet (Gomeri People).

Participants introduced themselves and gave some personal background.

John gave a brief overview on the Guidelines for establishing and operating community consultative committees for mining projects issued by the NSW Government Department of Planning in June 2007 (a copy was provided to all present). The purpose for the committee is to provide a forum for the community and Maules Creek to exchange information and to engage in consultation on matters affecting the community.

John requested that the representatives of the community should liaise with the community and bring topical items to the CCC for discussion.

John also asked that members who may have concerns of a personal nature about mining operations affecting them or their property, that they bring those concerns, other than where the wider community might also be interested, to the mining company personally.

In the introductions, Peter Watson made the following points:- he wanted to see that the mine did not affect farming and vice versa. He also stated that he was disappointed that MCC had appointed a chair from outside the area whom was a fly in fly out and not a local. John Turner advised that the Chair was decided by the DG of Planning and Infrastructure not Maules Creek Coal.

## **2. Project Background and Project Ownership**

Craig Simmons gave a brief overview about the history to the Project.

Mining authorities originally granted in the 1970s. An extensive exploration program was undertaken at the time and a development consent was granted in June 1990. Coal & Allied could have started in 1990 but due to company reasons did not. The original consent would have been valid for 21 years. Aston Coal purchased the project from RTCA in early 2010. The project was 100% owned by Aston, over the last 3 years Aston has sold a 15% share to Itochu Coal Resources Australia (ICRA MC) and another 10% share to J-Power Australia. The project ownership now stands as 75% owned by Aston Coal 2 Pty, 15% ICRA MC and 10% J-Power Australia.

Whitehaven Coal merged with Aston on April 2012 acquiring a share component of the Maules Creek Coal Project. Aston Coal 2 is now a wholly owned subsidiary of Whitehaven Coal

The Maules Creek Coal Project Approval (PA10\_0138) was received on 23 October 2012.

## **3. Project Update**

Maules Creek Coal Pty Limited is seeking contemporary project approval under Part 3A of the EP&A Act to allow for the development of a 21 year open cut coal mining operation and associated infrastructure. The key infrastructure items include:

- CHPP with capacity of 13 Mtpa ROM Coal
- Tailings Processing
- Rail Spur, rail loop & load out facility
- Mine access road
- Administration, workshop & related facilities
- Water pipeline & Pumping Station

- Supporting power and communications infrastructure.

A portion of the Rail Spur will be constructed as part of the Boggabri Coal Expansion approval which was received in July last year. Through consultation and DoPI direction, they did not want to see 2 rail spurs in close proximity across the Namoi River so the first portion of the Rail Spur will be shared infrastructure for Maules Creek and Boggabri Coal.

Peter Watson raised the issue of the design of the rail viaduct. Craig indicated that approval of the design primarily rests under Boggabri Coal's approval. Peter noted that the design has never been made public and that he would like to see some design drawing. Craig said he would seek some information on the design from Boggabri Coal and discussion further with Peter.

A map of the construction activities prior to production was provided to attendees.

The project approvals can be viewed on the company website and approved management plans will be added progressively.

There is a current EPL held for the project.

Approval of management plans are at a stage where construction can commence. Maules Creek Coal is still in discussion with SEWPaC regarding some conditions. Construction is expected to commence in July/August 2013 with construction for approximately 12 to 15 months and the Open Cut to start approximately 3 to 4 months prior to the end of construction.

Construction of the Accommodation Camp has commenced just outside of Boggabri. The MAC Group are constructing this and Maules Creek Coal has rooms allocated.

Following the project update the Chair called for questions.

Peter Watson asked what impact the rail will have on the flood plain and is there a plan available? Where do the community go to obtain this information?

Craig Simmons advised that construction of the rail across the flood plain is covered under Boggabri Coal's project approval, and there is a joint venture in place between Boggabri Coal and Maules Creek Coal to cover commercial arrangements. The design has been subject to extensive flood studies and will be approved by the appropriate agencies.

Peter Watson enquired whether Maules Creek workers will be utilising the Boggabri or the Narrabri MAC Camp.

Craig Simmons advised that Maules Creek will utilise both camps. It was also stated that during construction Maules Creek is urging contractors to utilise as many local workers as possible, and the MAC accommodation is for the workers with skill sets not readily available in the local community.

Peter Watson asked what the directions for the Narrabri MAC Camp were for traffic. Craig advised that the access to site will be via the Kamilaroi Highway, and over the iron bridge on to Manilla and Therribri Roads, with vehicles over the weight restriction of the iron bridge would utilise Bluevale Road, North of Gunnedah. The Traffic Management Plan will be lodged on the company website and will be available for public view. Under the TMP plan most of the workers on site will be transported by bus along designated routes as approved in the Traffic Management Plan.

Peter Watson has been approached by a member of the community (southern side of project) who is concerned about the heavy vehicle in front of his property (dust and impact on the gravel road).

Craig advised that it is a condition for the project that the unsealed section of Manilla Road is to be sealed. Planning for the sealing has commenced.

Peter Watson enquired whether all light vehicles will be using Leards Forest Road and not Therribri Road.

Craig advised that the majority of construction traffic will be via Leards Forest Road and only minimal construction traffic on Therribri Road until the mine access road is commissioned.

Peter Watson asked if the VPA was up for discussion as he understood that it was confidential.

Craig advised that the VPA is not a confidential document and it is included as an appendix in the Project Approval which is available on the company website

Lloyd Finlay also advised Peter Watson that you may request a copy of the Maules Creek VPA at Council

#### **4. Biodiversity Management Plan**

Daniel Martin gave a presentation of the key points from the Biodiversity Management Plan.

See attachment

##### **Questions**

Q. Rod Woolford – Is Maules Creek going to employ people for trapping animals like Boggabri?

A. Daniel Martin – The Maules Creek Trapping and Tracking Program, is similar to Boggabri Coal's..

Q. Rod Woolford – Is Maules Creek going to adopt similar practices to Boggabri Coal in regards to rehabilitation? (Point being that Boggabri Coal mulches its timber and mixes it into the top soil and the result is good.)

A. Daniel Martin – Maules Creek have a Rehabilitation Management plan in the draft/consultation phase with DRE. Yes, Maules Creek will adopt similar practices for rehabilitation. Maules Creek is currently in consultation with Boggabri Coal regarding their processes and who they use for their rehabilitation and mulching of timber.

Q. Rod Woolford – Have feral cats been considered to be included in the control of feral animals?

A. Daniel Martin – Yes, and will be included in the BMP.

Q. Lloyd Finlay – Who will maintain Leards forest road?

A. Craig Simmons – Maules Creek's will deal with impacts due to its traffic movements.

Q. Peter Watson – are the Offsets for grazing or for protection of vegetation?

A. Daniel Martin – There are some for both purposes. Grazing management is a tool that can be used with offset management in vegetated areas. The Biodiversity Management Plan shows the different areas for grazing cycles and offset management

Q. Peter Watson – Agree that grazing can assist with regeneration.

A. Daniel Martin – We invite input from the farming community on what practices have proven to be effective.

Q. Lloyd Finlay – Where Maules Creek leases a property it owns, does Maules Creek take responsibility for control of weeds and feral animals.

A. Daniel Martin – ultimately yes but the lessee will have clear responsibilities under their lease arrangements.

Q. Peter Watson – Under the conditions Maules Creek will be purchasing more offset country?

A. Daniel Martin – Regional Biodiversity Strategy is being developed through consultation with other mines in the precinct and State and Federal agencies. That strategy when developed will guide the purchases.

Q. Peter Watson – Is the rehabilitation of the mine site part of the offsets strategy?

A. Daniel Martin – Rehabilitation of the mine site is heavily regulated under the Rehabilitation Plan and the Mine Operations Plan. Maules Creek has submitted a draft plan to DRE for consultation..

Daniel Martin made note that he has heard back from some of the other CCC members that could not attend this meeting and they had no major comments on the BMP at the time.

Craig Simmons – Management Plans including the BMP are live documents. They will be implemented and monitored and any changes will be reviewed by Government Departments. Trials will be implemented and best practises adopted so it will evolve. This will take place in consultation with the various agencies and the community.

## **5. General Business**

Peter Watson – Would like to have the BMP on the agenda at the next meeting as well.

Biodiversity Management Plan will stay on the agenda for future meetings as it is an important issue

If anyone would like any other items added to the agenda they should contact Daniel Martin by phone or email

Lloyd Finlay – Can meetings be in the late afternoon,

Daniel Martin will liaise with all members as to suitable times and will advise of a meeting timetable in advance with minimum 4 weeks' notice and will provide an agenda at this time.

Minutes will be developed by the company and sent to John Turner. John Turner will contact committee members for comment on minutes prior to them being uploaded to the internet.

Daniel Martin will send John Turner the committee members contact details and email Peter Watson when Management Plans are uploaded to the internet.

Daniel Martin asked committee members if they are happy for their names and email addressed to be displayed on the Maules Creek Environmental internet page so members of the community can contact them. All in attendance agreed this was a good idea. Daniel to check with members that did not attend this meeting

John Turner – Is everyone satisfied with the arrangements

Attendees – Yes

Rod Woolford – What is the process for letting the community know about what happened at this meeting?

John Turner noted that no one can put out anything on behalf of the committee however you can personally comment.

Craig Simmons – Whitehaven will put out a press release about the first MCC CCC meeting and its purpose, and that minutes of the meeting will be available on the company website.

John Turner requested site visit for next meeting.

**Meeting Closed:** 11:20am

## **Minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Maules Creek Coal Community Consultative Committee**

**Meeting Held:** 14<sup>th</sup> August 2013, 2:30pm

**Venue:** Maules Creek Coal, Finance Office Boardroom, Boggabri

**Present:** Mr John Turner, Chair for CCC  
Mr Peter Watson, Community Rep  
Clr Lloyd Finlay, Narrabri Shire Rep  
Clr John Tough, Narrabri Shire Rep  
Mr Jason Davis, Community Rep  
Ms Carolyn Nancarrow, Community Rep  
Ms Toni Comber, Community Rep  
Mr Daniel Martin, Environment & Heritage Manager  
Mr Craig Simmons, Area Manager Services  
Mr Brian Cole, Executive General Manager – Project Delivery  
Miss Sandie Davis, Administration Assistant

**Apologies:** Greening Australia Rep, Green group Rep  
Mr Rod Woolford, Community Rep

### **1. Introductions**

Some of the participants who could not attend first meeting introduced themselves and gave some personal background.

Dan explained that meeting should run in line with the agenda, the agenda follows what is outlined in the Guidelines for establishing and operating community consultative committees for mining projects issued by the NSW Government Department of Planning in June 2007.

Peter Watson asked if Greening Australia will represent the three mining CCC's.

Dan explained that he is not sure on the other mines conditions, however Maules Creek is required to have a green group on their CCC.

### **2. Business Arising from Previous Minutes**

- PW requested an update on the rail bridge over the flood plain, CS provided an update - the approval for construction of the bridge over the flood plain has



been submitted to New South Wales Office Of Water (NOW) as the approving body, had been on public display and public submissions had closed. CS noted that he had been in contact with Boggabri Coal and that they had been speaking with Peter re the design also.

- Biodiversity Management Plan – no further comments received.
- PW requested information about the court case and what it was in relation to. CS gave an overview that a date was set for the hearing, middle of September and that it was in relation to a challenge to the federal ,minister's approval decision for the project.

### **3. Correspondence**

- Cultural Heritage Management

MCC received a letter from DP&I asking for further information on the Salvage Program.

CS gave an update on the salvage works. During the fourth week of salvage the registered aboriginal parties (RAPs) on site at the time ceased salvage work due to some issues they raised. Since that time there has been extensive consultation with the Aboriginal community.

JD asked if they have been finding many artefacts out on site. DM, Yes they have recovered several hundred rock fragments which have been assessed as being artefacts as well as a piece of rock considered to be a grindstone.

CCC members requested it remained on the minutes for further feedback/progress for next meeting.

### **4. Company Reports and Overview of Activities**

- Project Update

CS updated the CCC on recent modification approval and what it meant for site. CHPP realignment and high voltage power supply.

JT asked if anyone had questions on this topic?

LF asked why we had to rotate the stockpiles. Was it because of noise or dust?

CS explained during the detailed design a realignment of the CHPP was required to provide safe foundation conditions for the product stockpiles and provide sufficient distance for the train load out conveyor to be designed with a suitable and safe incline.

JT asked if there were any more questions regarding the modification.  
There were no further questions.

- EDO (Environmental Defenders Office)

EDO lodged an appeal against the federal minister's decision. The EDO is representing a green group (NICE). The court hearing is due the middle of September.

CN asked what effect will the election play on this issue?

CS advised it would have no effect on the appeal or the court hearing dates.

- Community Complaints and Responses

Nil the last three months.

CS explained the community hotline 1800 Maules, can be used for community feedback or complaints.

Community newsletter has been sent out, and went to all local residents. CS mentioned that if CCC members did not receive one please advise us so we can update our records.

- Monitoring

DM explained that monitoring was still ongoing, for air quality, ground water and surface water.

DM provided an overview of monitoring results from a number of the monitoring locations around the project.

PW asked how the maximum PM 2.5 values was worked out.

DM explained that the maximum level indicated on the table was from a guideline on PM 2.5 levels.

TC asked what MCC expect PM 2.5 to get to when the project starts.

DM responded that not much change would be expected for PM 2.5

LF asked if we have considered putting one of these monitors closer to Boggabri.

DM explained that there is going to be other monitors installed in the local area.

PW asked what we are going to do with this data. what happens with a high reading in operation and what MCC response will be.

CS explained that once we commence, real time monitoring will be used and a trigger level will be set, and the operations team will be notified so that operations can be altered and react before there is an exceedence. All exceedences above the approval and EPL limits are required to be notified to the DPI and EPA, recorded on the company's website and reported in the annual environmental reports. Breaches will also be discussed at CCC meetings.

PW is the high vol monitoring 24 hours a day or weekly? How do we know what the problem was?

DM explained that the sampler at Tralee is a six day cycle and results are only notified after the event.

LF asked if cameras can be placed at monitoring devices?

CS explained that EPA have been looking at this type of monitoring, however, has not been implemented at this stage.

PW asked if Maules Creek groundwater is being monitored.

DM explained groundwater is currently being monitored on a regular basis inside the coal lease boundaries and additional groundwater bores will be installed outside the coal lease boundary and regularly monitored.

PW suggested different naming convention of graphs so community can understand what they are viewing.

- **Blast Management**

DM provided a presentation on the Blast Management Plan to receive and community feedback

TC asked how many more 0.5mm/s blast would we be doing.

DM explained that there is no limit to these levels of blasts.

CS explained that the approval conditions relate to the number of blasts MCC was allowed to have, IE one blast a day, unless a blast generates ground vibrations of 0.5mm/s or less.

PW asked what community members should do if they are concerned about vibration thru their house.

DM explained that they need to contact MCC. MCC would discuss the matter and a engineer could be sent out to complete dilapidation report.

TC suggested that by the time concerned residents have approached the mine it may be too late and requested would the mine be proactive on undertaking reports before blasting commenced.

CS responded there are no residents within 2 km of the project. MCC will identify the nearest residence to determine whether dilapidation reports would be required. Alternatively if private landowners close to the project have concerns they should contact MCC to discuss further.

LF raised the issue of noise, he has had times at his place when he can hear mining machinery reversing etc. and what would the process be.

DM commented that residents need to contact the community hotline and make a report on the noise. If the noise is ongoing then monitoring will be undertaken to see what the noise levels are at the receiver.

JT asked if there were any further questions.  
No further comments.

## **5. General Business**

JD raised the issue of living arrangements, with the fly in fly out (FIFO) workers. He has been told that the FIFO workers are being told from the other mines that they have to stay in the MAC Camp, as they have rooms there that they are paying for. By doing this it is taking business away from other local businesses and landlords. He believes that the company should be pushing for people to relocate to the Boggabri community. He understands that you can't tell people where they can live, as that has been discussed at other mines CCC meetings.

CS clarified that back when the social impact assessment was completed for the MCC EA, the local accommodation would be strained during construction and into operations, as well as ramp up of the neighbouring Boggabri Mine. Therefore to reduce any increase pressure on the local housing market including rentals and motels a residential camp was considered to remove some of the housing pressure.

JD suggested why don't we offer some sort of incentive for them to live in Boggabri or the local townships.

CS explained that for construction workforce it wouldn't be suitable as the local infrastructure would not support the increase in the local population for a short period of time maybe 12 months.

JD clarified he meant more for operations phase.

CS explained that MCC will work towards a higher percentage of local work force, however it may take some time for workers to relocate and for the local infrastructure to be planned and developed to support the increase to the permanent population.

PW again raised that, although we are lucky to have John as the chair, but he feels that the chair should be a local resident. He feels it sends the wrong message, that the chair of this committee is not a local, so it is putting a message out there that the company is promoting FIFO.

JT again explained that the company does not appoint the chair, it is decided by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure.

RW had emailed in a question: I have some concerns that locals will be the last to be considered for employment, and the mine is gearing up for fifo workers. Is it possible to consider locals first? Downer are putting new staff on, and will only consider experienced workers. I hope Whitehaven is more community minded.

CS explained that WHC have a high percentage of locals in our workforce, and we will be trying to source as many locals as possible. However, we may require certain skilled people to fill selected roles that may not be able to be found locally.

TC asked what percentage of our workforce is/would be aboriginal?

CS explained he was unsure of the percentage within Whitehaven, however there would be opportunities and expected the numbers to increase with the start of the project.

LF asked about the Manilla Road upgrade design, apparently it is 90% complete?

CS explained that MCC had contacted a company that had previously conducted some design work for the section of Manilla Road and was in tender discussions with them and another design company before awarding the design contract.

LF asked if Whitehaven has been involved in any design work on the Tarairo bridge.

CS replied MCC hadn't.

PW asked about the water licences? In regard to ground water,

DM explained that we have to hold onto current licences to account for all impacts with in licensing zones.

**Meeting Closed:** 4:15pm

## **Minutes of the Boggabri – Tarrawonga – Maules Creek Community Consultative Committee**

**Meeting Held:** 19<sup>th</sup> November 2013, 2:30pm

**Venue:** Boggabri Bowling Club

### **1.0 Present and Apologies**

**Present:** John Turner (JT), Independent Chairman  
Tim Muldoon (TM), Manager Community Relations - Whitehaven  
Anthony Margetts (AM), Operations Manager - Tarrawonga  
Danny Young (DY), Group Environmental Manager - Whitehaven  
Jill Johnson (JJ), Environmental Officer – Whitehaven  
Chase Dingle (CD) – Environmental Superintendent – Boggabri Coal  
Joe Rennick (JR) – Environmental Coordinator – Boggabri Coal  
Ken McLaren (KM) – General Manager – Boggabri Coal  
Mark Cornwell (MC) - Expansion Project - Project Manager – Boggabri Coal  
Dan Martin (DM) – Environmental Manager – Maules Creek  
Brian Cole (BC) – EGM Projects Delivery – Maules Creek  
Craig Simmons (CS) – Area Manager Services – Maules Creek  
Julie Heiler (JH), Community Representative  
Richard Gillham (RG), Community Representative  
Jason Davis (JD), Community Representative  
Karen Nankarrow (NK), Community Representative  
John Bastardo (JB), Community Representative  
Marty Brennan (MB), Community Representative  
Alistair Todd (AT) – Maules Creek Community Council  
Toni Comber (TC) – Red Chief Local Aboriginal Land Council  
Clr Catherine Collyer (CC), Narrabri Shire Council rep for Tarrawonga and Boggabri Coal CCC  
Lloyd Finlay (LF), Narrabri Shire Council rep for Maules Creek Coal

**Apologies:** Peter Laird, Community Representative  
Clr Hans Allgayer, Gunnedah Shire Council  
Jim Picton, Community Representative  
Rodney Woolford, Community Representative  
Greening Australia  
Steve Talbott, Cultural Heritage Groups Representative

### **2.0 Declaration of Pecuniary or Non-Pecuniary Interests**

JH leases “Velyama” from Aston Resources (now Whitehaven) and is in discussions with Whitehaven regarding water issues at her property.

RG – Property falls into the ‘Zone of Affectation’ for Acquisition by Boggabri Coal Mine (BCM).

CC – Leases country owned by BCM

### **3.0 Introduction to inaugural BTM Complex CCC meeting**

JT provided an introduction to the first cumulative meeting and explained briefly how he expected the meeting to be conducted.

### **4.0 General Business – PowerPoint presentation**

- 4.1 DY, CD and BC provided a general status update for the projects (Tarrawonga, Boggabri Coal and Maules Creek, respectively).
- 4.2 DY provided an overview of the development of the following cumulative impacts management plans:

#### **4.2.1 Cumulative Air Quality Management Plan**

CC said that the EPA had a workshop at NSC regarding a proposed regional air monitoring network similar to the system that operates in the Upper Hunter. Given the mines are referring to a cumulative monitoring system, CC asked whether the mines had been discussing the system with the EPA. CC said the EPA are looking to implement the system in mid 2014 and that the public will be able to access the information.

DY said the mines have known that the EPA and DoPI have been considering a regional monitoring network for some time but the departments haven't discussed it in detail with the mines to date.

CC said she thinks it would be very good because the network would cover a larger area.

JH asked CC if the EPA system would be separate to the mine monitoring network or combined. CC said she believed it would be one system overseen by the EPA.

DY said the cumulative air monitoring strategy that the mines are proposing is based on the Project Approval requirements for each site and would be run by the mining companies, not the EPA. He said he envisages that the regional monitoring network would be run separately by the EPA.

JR said there had been some general discussions with the EPA about regional monitoring but the mines need to do their own monitoring for site compliance requirements whereas the EPA system would be a broader network that has nothing to do with the compliance requirements of each site.

AT asked if air sampling identified an exceedance would all three sites have to shut down. DY said the monitoring equipment will be able to identify the source of the dust and therefore only the mine, or mines, causing the dust would need to react.

CC said the EPA indicated they would be able to pinpoint which mines were exceeding compliance limits.

JH asked if Werris Creek would be included in the regional monitoring network. CC said she thinks so but can't be sure. She knows that Manilla and the other side of Narrabri would be included.

JH asked how the EPA network would be funded and made reference to the camera at Tarrawonga that the EPA installed and then couldn't fund. CC said that would be discussed between the EPA and the mines.

DY said the draft strategy had been issued to DoPI and is awaiting a response. The mines can't progress the strategy until then.

AT asked if the information from the monitoring network for the mines would be available on a website in real time. DY said the strategy requires provision of information but real time data identifies a number of sources, not just mining specific sources, and therefore needs to be validated. He said the format of provision of information still needs to be decided with the Department.

AT said if there is a dust problem during the evening but not during the day then the elevated result could be averaged over the day and not identified in the validated result. DY said the mines get the information in real time so they can react to the information. AT said but the public won't have access to it. DY said validation of data takes time and is reviewed by accredited and certified professionals.

#### **4.2.2 Cumulative Noise Management Plan**

MB asked whether more trucks increase the noise level. DY said more trucks make the overall noise louder but the increase is logarithmic.

DY provided an overview of a noise chart (including low frequency and total noise) the alerting system and live streaming for identifying noise sources.

AT asked if low frequency noise is the same as infrasound (can't be felt or heard within 7km of the noise source but can be heard further away). DY said he wasn't sure of infrasound or if it was the same as low frequency noise.

#### **4.2.3 Cumulative Water Management Plan**

DY said the Cumulative Water Management Plan had been through an approval process with SEWPaC.

DM identified on a plan which monitoring bores had been installed and which were due to be installed in the near future.

DY said the information from the cumulative water monitoring network would be used to recalibrate each mine's water model.

TC asked DM to clarify if three monitoring bores had been drilled on "Velyama". DM said only two.

CC asked if all of this proposed monitoring would be able to indicate a reduction in groundwater levels. DM said the monitoring bores target the deeper aquifers and the alluvium. The probes go through coal seams, interburden and alluvium and can pick up changes in each location. CC asked whether Boggabri's town water supply would be affected. DM said the water supply is much further south so impact is highly unlikely. CD said the idea of the monitoring locations closer to the sites is to pick up any localised issues before they extend to any sensitive receivers.

AT asked if the bore at Green Gully was the same depth as the pit. DM said it targeted the last seam in the mining sequence.



DM said all water monitoring information will be available to the public via reports that each mine will produce.

JH asked about sensors on private bores. DM said the network being discussed is a cumulative network and doesn't replace the existing monitoring network that each of the sites have in place.

TM asked how the source of impact can be identified (ie. irrigation or mining). DY said if impact from drawdown is identified a hydrogeologist would be engaged to assess. JR said you also need to consider seasonal changes.

#### **4.2.4 Regional Biodiversity Strategy**

No comments were received from the floor.

#### **4.2.5 Regional Aboriginal Heritage Conservation Strategy**

TC said that the information DY presented contradicts what BC had said earlier. She said that BC had indicated the program was almost complete but DY is saying it's only just starting. BC said he had indicated the salvage for the Maules Creek site was almost complete and that DY is referring to a cumulative strategy for the three mines. DY said the cumulative strategy is a separate process to each individual projects heritage management requirements.

- 4.3 DY explained that under the Voluntary Planning Agreements with NSC each of the three mines was required to provide \$100,000 funding for environmental projects for the local community. He said use of the funding was to be decided by the CCCs. The funding was raised at the last Tarrawonga CCC meeting with consideration that the joint CCC meeting was a good forum to discuss the options.

JT asked if NSC had any priorities. CC said it hadn't been discussed and that NSC would wait to see what the CCC's suggest.

JH said she is concerned about the changes in flood patterns due to the change in topography and that the landholders aren't getting enough information from the gauge at the Iron Bridge. She said sheep were stranded during the last flood as the information provided was incorrect. She has spoken with someone at the SES who considered that it was a good idea to install additional gauges. The options JH provided were Peter Watson's "Rosewood" property for a volume gauge and Andy Watson's "Nandewar" property for a height gauge.

JH said costs would be \$68,000 for the volume gauge and \$35,000 for the height gauge plus additional costs for NOW to monitor and maintain the gauges. She said there is also an issue with NOW embracing latest technology and that they want to continue to use old technology. NSC think it's a good idea but don't have money to maintain the system. She suggested that the mines could adopt the system and provide the information to BOM and NOW.

JH provided a second option for use of the funding. She said the RFS has a problem with fires in remote areas. If they could see the smoke earlier they could get to the fire quicker. She proposed a remote camera with a 360° view with the following costings:

- Santos tower – which can see the Pilliga and Kaputar regions: \$35,000
- Own 12m high tower - \$25,000.

The Santos tower option is more expensive because they would require riggers from Sydney to install it but it would provide a much better outlook than the 12m

high tower which may have an obscured view from trees. There would also be a \$1500 per year maintenance fee that RFS is willing to fund.

JH also suggested that the cameras can be used to monitor feral animal populations and native wildlife. She said if they got the go ahead it could be running by January.

CC said suggestions need to be accepted by the CCC and presented to NSC.

AT said the Maules Creek Community Council have discussed use of the funds and don't want to take over funding that is already in place (ie. for weed control). He suggested a company that co-ordinates projects for installation of solar panels for property owners. AT mentioned the Manilla project (where community invested in solar power) and the Farming the Sun initiative.

CC asked what sort of projects AT was referring to (ie. local landholders or community things such as schools). AT said people would have to buy their own solar panels but commissioning the consultant would allow for bulk buying power and assist individuals to install the correct solar power systems. AT said that solar power has a net benefit for the environment.

JH said the interest being earned on the funds being held by NSC should be included in the overall fund.

AT noted that in addition to the environmental trust fund a royalty for tonnage will also be provided to NSC.

JH asked DM if the Maules Creek money had been paid yet. DM said it hadn't because they are waiting for the outcome of the court decision.

JJ suggested a timeframe for suggestions. JT said projects should be discussed at the next individual CCC meetings and then a decision should be made shortly thereafter. JT said he will coordinate the process after the next meetings and in the meantime suggestions can be emailed to him. JH said issues are never resolved because the meetings are only held every 3 months. JT said this issue would be resolved.

TC asked how the flood gauge would be compromised by the new bridge. JH said she wasn't sure. RG said he didn't think it would make a difference.

## **5.0 New Business**

- 5.1 JH said that the Iron Bridge will be decommissioned once the new bridge is constructed but it will remain due to its historical significance. She said a meeting will be held in Boggabri to discuss options for the bridge so that it still has a purpose (ie. picnic area) and she thinks the mines should be involved as the mines are one of the reasons a new bridge is required.
- 5.2 AT said there are a lot of locked gates on properties that the mines own and wanted to know what the RFS should do if a fire starts on one of the properties. RG said RFS has the authority to cut the fence or locks. AT suggested RFS locks on all gates with keys in each fire truck. JH said Country Energy tried that previously but there were issues with the locks. TM said Whitehaven has recently included a clause in leases that require the lessee to be part of the RFS or at the least provide contact details to the RFS.
- 5.3 JH said there are fire trails that are now part of offsets and the RFS needs assurance that the trails will remain. She has organised for Russell Heiler to talk

with representatives from the three mines after the meeting and would like the representatives to participate in a meeting at the fire control centre in Narrabri.

- 5.4 AT asked what happens if someone in the community asks a CCC representative a question about one or more of the mines who that question should be referred to. JT said in the first instance the CCC rep should contact the mines directly and if they don't get an acceptable answer to contact him.
- 5.5 LF said there is still a problem with pig chasers and asked that each mine mention the issue again in toolbox talks. He said he knows of one issue of a pig chaser who works at Boggabri Coal. CC also said they had an issue with pig chasers but acknowledged that it's not just people who work at the mines. TM said that the companies do toolbox the issue and will do it again. He also said that if anyone catches people on our land we are happy to prosecute.

## **6.0 Next Meeting**

Date and time for next individual CCC meetings to be advised.

Meeting closed at 4:10pm.

John Turner - Chair