



WHITEHAVEN COAL

# SUNNYSIDE COAL MINE

## NEWSLETTER N<sup>o</sup>1

SUMMER 2013

### CARE AND MAINTENANCE STATUS

On the 25<sup>th</sup> October 2012, Whitehaven announced that mining operations would be suspended at Sunnyside and the mine would be placed in a care and maintenance phase. The decision was made as a result of declining coal prices applicable to the quality of marketable coal at Sunnyside. Approximately 14 Whitehaven employees and 23 external contractors were employed at the mine. All Whitehaven employees were offered positions at other Whitehaven sites.

Mining operations ceased on the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2012, with stockpiled ROM coal transported to the Whitehaven CHPP on a campaign basis until May 2013. A Care and Maintenance Mining Operations Plan (MOP) is to be submitted to Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services, Division of Resources and Energy (DTIRIS – DRE) for the remainder of the project approval period, or until coal markets improve and allow mining to recommence. The MOP will address ongoing rehabilitation and final closure of the mine if economic conditions do not improve.

While mining has been suspended, environmental monitoring and the rehabilitation program remain active.

### SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION

Over recent months Sunnyside has experienced spontaneous combustion issues as a result of exposed carbonaceous material at the base of the pit. Whitehaven has been temporarily managing the issue via dozer push, however, due to ongoing outbreaks of spontaneous combustion across different areas of the pit, a comprehensive capping program has been developed. The plan has been provided to the Environment Protection Authority (EPA), following issue of a Notice of Cleanup Action, and comprises the following major components:

- Engagement of a contract Open Cut Examiner to supervise the works in accordance with statutory requirements;
- Completion of appropriate Risk Assessments for the project in accordance with Safety Management Standards, and identification of risk management measures for personnel working in proximity to the spontaneous combustion;
- Engagement of a suitable contractor and equipment to complete the works;
- Progressive completion of earthmoving works to ensure sufficient capping material is available as early as possible. Earthmoving will involve dozing material from the eastern waste emplacement, drill and blast of the western highwall and dozing of material in this area as well as drill and blast of the northern section of the pit to access suitable cover material for hauling and dumping in the southern area of the pit. The rate of spontaneous combustion may increase while reshaping is carried out. Capping material will be placed nearby to ameliorate these outbreaks as required.

Areas exhibiting spontaneous combustion will be capped with a minimum of 5m of suitable material and the final landform in these areas will be compliant to final landform requirements as described in the Sunnyside Mining Operations Plan.

Works are expected to commence in December 2013 with completion planned for March 2014.

In recognition of the concerns raised by the adjacent landholders, Whitehaven is undertaking a communication program to ensure the community is informed as to actions occurring at Sunnyside Mine to resolve the spontaneous combustion issue. The communication strategy involves:

1. Direct phone contact with the Sunnyside Community Consultative Committee (CCC) Chairperson;
2. Direct phone contact with those community members who have raised concerns either direct to Whitehaven or via the CCC or EPA.
3. Provision of this newsletter to CCC members, surrounding landholders and the Gunnedah Shire Council. The newsletter will also be available on the Whitehaven website.
4. Ongoing communication with the EPA, Department of Planning and Infrastructure and Division of Resources and Energy regarding the progress of capping of the affected area.

Contact details are provided on page 2 if you require any further information on spontaneous combustion at Sunnyside.



## INDEPENDENT ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT

The Project Approval for Sunnyside requires the completion of an Independent Environmental Audit every three years.

Environmental consultants Umwelt (Australia) Pty Limited were appointed by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure to undertake the latest audit. The site inspection was completed by Umwelt in October 2013 and Whitehaven is currently awaiting issue of the final audit report. Preliminary advice from the auditors indicates general compliance with approval conditions with few non-compliances identified. The non-compliances relate to noise and blast exceedances in 2011 and 2012 and the spontaneous combustion issues discussed in detail above.

The final audit report will be issued to the CCC and provided on the Whitehaven website once approved by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure.



## COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Sunnyside operates a Community Consultative Committee (CCC) which is comprised of an Independent Chair, Gunnedah Shire Council representative, members of the local community and Whitehaven representatives. Community representatives are appointed by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure.

Until recently the CCC met on a quarterly basis however at the last meeting in June it was agreed that meetings should be held annually whilst the site is in the care and maintenance phase.

If you have any issues that you wish to raise in relation to the Sunnyside site you can contact Whitehaven directly (contact details below) or any of the CCC members.

Current members are:

- Michael Broekman, Independent Chair  
0408 810 968
- Clr Hans Allgayer, Gunnedah Shire Council
- Liz Ferguson, Community representative
- Bruce Reid, Community representative
- Glenn Bailey, Community representative
- Brittany Riley, Community representative

## CONTACT DETAILS

### ENVIRONMENTAL ENQUIRIES

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### COMPLAINTS HOTLINE

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FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT

[www.whitehavencoal.com.au](http://www.whitehavencoal.com.au)