

**MINUTES OF THE DARTBROOK COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING – 23 November 2022**

ATTENDEES:		
Lisa Andrews	LA	Independent Chairperson
Tony Lonergan	TL	Community Representative
Annette Rahn	AR	Community Representative
Jennifer Lecky	JL	Community Representative
Arthur Mitchell	AM	Community Representative
Paul Smith	PS	Upper Hunter Shire Council (UHSC) Representative
Allison McPhee	AMc	UHSC Councillor
Theresa Folpp	TF	Muswellbrook Shire Council (MSC) Representative
David Conry**	DC	AQC Representative
Michael Mapp	MM	Tetra Resources
Jeff Beatty*	JB	Tetra Resources
James Bailey	JBA	James Bailey & Associates Pty Ltd
Dorian Walsh	DW	James Bailey & Associates Pty Ltd
APOLOGIES:		
De-Anne Douglas	DD	Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council Representative
John Swan	JS	AQC Representative

* Attended the meeting remotely via Teams.

** DC left the meeting at 11:07am.

1. INTRODUCTION & APOLOGIES:

- 1.1 The meeting was opened by LA at 10:06am, acknowledging those attending on site at the Dartbrook offices and remotely via Teams.
- 1.2 LA confirmed the apologies for the meeting per the above list.
- 1.3 LA introduced AMc to the CCC.
- 1.4 DC introduced MM and JB to the CCC.

2. DECLARATIONS

- 2.1 LA made a declaration in relation to her appointed role as Independent Chair to the CCC.
- 2.2 LA will send governance forms out to JB and JS as they noted that they will be regular attendees at future meetings.

3. CORRESPONDENCE

- 3.1 LA confirmed the CCC correspondence distributed since the previous meeting in March 2022, as confirmed in the agenda distributed in advance of the November 2022 meeting.

**MINUTES OF THE DARTBROOK COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING – 23 November 2022**

- 3.2 LA acknowledged questions received from TF in advance of the meeting and that these would be addressed under the agenda items below.

4. PREVIOUS MINUTES

- 4.1 There were no comments or changes to the minutes from the previous meeting on 16 March 2022.

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

- 5.1 LA reviewed the actions arising from the previous meeting, confirming that the approval conditions of DA 200-5-2003 MOD7 from the Land and Environment Court (LAEC) had been distributed to all CCC representatives following the meeting.

6. PROJECT UPDATE – MODIFICATION 7

- 6.1 DC gave an update on MOD7 and the project more broadly, noting the capital raising work underway to recommence operations on site in 2023. DC noted that overall, AQC are in a sound financial position to allow the recommencement in accordance with the MOD7 approval requirements.
- 6.2 MM and JB provided a background on their respective extensive experience over many years in the mining industry both in the Upper Hunter Valley, nationally and internationally.
- 6.3 MM noted a timeline to recommencement of at least six to seven months from the receipt of full funding required (i.e. from Q3 2023). This timeline reflected the need to complete works required to support mining operations, including:
- Dewatering and re-supporting of the Hunter Tunnel;
 - Re-establishment of conveyor links;
 - Reconfiguring the Coal Handling and Preparation Plan (CHPP) and installation of additional noise attenuation; and
 - Confirmation of arrangements for the new Dartbrook workforce.
- 6.4 AM questioned whether all the belts in the Hunter Tunnel would be replaced. MM confirmed that this would be the case.
- 6.5 TF questioned the timing of the operational workforce and what was required for construction. MM noted there would likely be some overlap at the end of the construction period between the construction workforce and the new mining workforce. The construction workforce would generally be contract labour.
- 6.6 AR noted the inconsistency with the earlier position of the company that coal would not need to be washed and questioned why washing was required. MM and JBA confirmed that the planned washing of the coal had evolved during the MOD7 assessment process and that washing had been approved as part of the LAEC determination.
- 6.7 JBA also confirmed that washing of the coal under current plans would not require an increase in the approved scale or footprint of the Reject Emplacement Area at the East Site opposite the CHPP.

**MINUTES OF THE DARTBROOK COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING – 23 November 2022**

- 6.8 JBA and MM confirmed that the site would remain under care and maintenance until the commencement of the CHPP works, which were expected to start the formal ‘construction’ phase of the project following discussions with DPE. JBA noted that a number of environmental management plans and other approvals were required to be in place prior to the start of construction.
- 6.9 JBA stated that under MOD7, there would not be any significant increase to the total area of surface disturbance approved for Dartbrook. JBA acknowledged the challenges associated with the management, re-disturbance and then rehabilitation of the REA.
- 6.10 MM described the bord and pillar mining method proposed and noted that this method would reduce surface subsidence impacts compared to the previous longwall mining operations. MM also noted that there were no current plans to restart longwall mining, although this method of mining is also approved, and that a new surface gas draining network would not be necessary under the bord and pillar methodology.
- 6.11 TL questioned the water storage capacity of the Wynn Seam goaf and the ability to manage water reporting to the Hunter Tunnel. MM noted that approximately 1.1 ML of water currently reports to the Hunter Tunnel each week and that the Wynn Seam goaf had adequate capacity to store this volume over the current life of mine.
- 6.12 TL asked whether the CHPP would be operated full time. MM stated that only the conveyors and stockpiles at the CHPP (to be reduced to 100,000 tonnes capacity) would be operated 24/7 in the initial startup phase, with additional attenuation to be put in place to minimise noise.
- 6.13 AR asked about noise monitoring arrangements for the CHPP. MM confirmed that noise monitoring would be set up prior to construction to confirm background levels and undertaken progressively from that time to assess the performance of noise attenuation. Bridges Acoustics has been commissioned to assist with this process. JBA confirmed that noise impact assessment criteria in the MOD7 consent had been set in accordance with the NSW noise guidelines, which generally set impact levels 5dB above background levels (e.g. at Aberdeen). Noise monitoring results would be recorded at locations representative of the nearest neighbours during the night.
- 6.14 JBA referred to historic noise issues from operations at the CHPP and MM confirmed that the install of appropriate sound attenuation with advice from Bridges was critical to minimise impacts to receivers and maintain compliance.
- The background on Dartbrook noise impact criteria, noise monitoring and complaints handling procedures was discussed. An update on the CHPP noise mitigation work and noise monitoring program for the site will be presented as part of the next CCC meeting. **ACTION**
- 6.15 TL sought confirmation over fugitive emissions monitoring that is currently being undertaken. JB confirmed that a monitoring system was in place to record fugitive gas emissions from the ventilation shaft. This system would be reviewed and upgraded prior to recommencement and regularly calibrated and audited. JB and MM also stated that Dartbrook are looking at longer-term options to utilise the gas and water from the old underground workings as a resource to ultimately support other activities on site.
- 6.16 TL also questioned whether there was any concrete planning for pre-drainage of gas, noting that mitigation of greenhouse emissions should be prioritised. MM noted that the current mining method had a different emissions profile to longwall extraction and that this would need to be determined.
- 6.17 AMc questioned the sources of water seeping into the Hunter Tunnel and TL asked whether there was a need for additional water requirements under the current plan. JBA noted that previous analysis showed that a large portion of the water reporting to the tunnel is from the

**MINUTES OF THE DARTBROOK COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING – 23 November 2022**

- hard rock aquifer, rather than from sources in the alluvium and the typical saline nature of this water. JB confirmed that water take from the Hunter River or other sources is not anticipated due to the stored water available in the Wynn Seam goaf.
- 6.18 AR asked about the difference in the Wynn and Kayuga seams. JB was not certain of the exact difference, but noted there was approximately 70m in relative height between the seams.
- 6.19 AM referred to underground water issues and impacts during previous operations on site. AMc also noted the need to monitor outside of mining areas and AQC owned land to assess potential impacts. MM mentioned that they have a groundwater monitoring system in place and was not intending to have additional monitoring than this. LA noted the need for a presentation on the site groundwater monitoring network at the next CCC meeting. **ACTION**
- 6.20 AMc confirmed that the major community issues of concern for the project were in relation to noise, greenhouse gas management and water.
- 6.21 JB described the typical water balance estimate for the site and the nature of the Kayuga seam in relation to the Wynn. TL noted that there would need to be flexibility in place for AQC to make up any shortfall in the water balance through existing licences and transfers from its affiliate agricultural landholders.
- 6.22 MM stated that the current approval allows for a maximum workforce of 292 personnel. Approximately 200 – 210 personnel would be needed to operate the site under the current plan, with the intention to employ most of the workforce directly through Tetra Resources.
- 6.23 MM noted recent meetings held with both MSC and UHSC regarding the respective Voluntary Planning Agreements (VPA). These were currently being reviewed and would be provided to AQC for signoff once done.
- 6.24 DC left the meeting at 11:07am.
- 6.25 TL noted his frustration with ongoing weed management issues on AQC land and the need for greater response on this, referring to an outbreak of St Johns Wort. DW noted that following TL's approach to AQC, further weed spraying had been commissioned however recent windy and wet weather had hampered spraying. TL requested a map showing the management status of AQC-owned land with appropriate contact details so he could contact the appropriate people on site to deal with directly over any weed and other problems. **ACTION.**

7. PROJECT UPDATE – ENVIRONMENTAL & LAND MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 DW provided an update on environmental monitoring and land management undertaken on site since the previous meeting. All monitoring data were within approved criteria, with no exceedances recorded.
- 7.2 DW noted that High Volume Air Sampling sites Hulbert and ESMS had experienced faults during the period since the last meeting due to electrical issues and vandalism. These issues were being resolved.
- 7.3 DW noted issues with access to the approved Hunter River surface water monitoring location since the previous meeting due to localised flooding.
- 7.4 DW started that one complaint had been received since the previous meeting, referring to the issue raised by TL in relation to a large area of St John's Wort that needed treatment. DW confirmed that this area would be treated as soon as a period of lower winds opened. DW also noted that no environmental incidents had occurred.

**MINUTES OF THE DARTBROOK COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING – 23 November 2022**

- 7.5 DW gave an update on the environmental management documents that were being updated in advance of the start of construction and the associated consultation with regulatory agencies over these documents.

8. GENERAL BUSINESS

- 8.1 TF provided an update on plans for the Muswellbrook bypass and MSC' s position on access issues in relation to the transport of wind farm components further to the west of the shire. MM confirmed that four groups have approached Dartbrook regarding potentially using the Dartbrook access road. TF noted that MSC were encouraging Energy Co. to review their plans and approach all parties with a consolidated strategy.
- 8.2 TL noted the statement that no new coal or gas projects should start to keep global temperature increases below 1.5°C and asked that AQC comment on this position and the requirement to manage Scope 3 emissions. MM noted that he would not make a response to the question, however he reiterated that the site would comply with all conditions of approval in relation to the management of greenhouse gas emissions. MM also noted the strong ongoing demand for the coal resource on site.
- 8.3 MM confirmed that the intention was still to recommence as a thermal mine, however there was future review available to diversify into metallurgical product.
- 8.4 LA confirmed that there was no further General Business.

9. MEETING CLOSE

- 9.1 LA confirmed the intention to continue to schedule CCC meetings on a bi-annual basis for the present, with the next meeting to be held on Wednesday 17 May 2023, commencing at 10:00am. LA noted that there was the flexibility to hold an extraordinary CCC meetings or increase the frequency of meeting back to four per year, if required closer to the commencement.
- 9.2 The meeting was closed at 11:33am, with LA thanking all for their attendance.

Action Items

ITEM	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
1.	Present the site groundwater monitoring network at the next CCC meeting.	DW
2.	Prepare a map showing the management status of AQC-owned land with appropriate contact details and send out to CCC representatives.	DW
3.	Provide an update on CHPP noise mitigation work and the site noise monitoring program, complaints handling procedures at the next CCC meeting.	DW