

RIXS CREEK MINE COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

MEETING: 21/10/2020

PRESENT: Chairperson - Lisa Andrews

Community Representatives – Patricia Bestic (PB), Councillor Sarah Lukeman (SL) and Deidre Olofsson (DO).

Company Representatives – Geoff Moore* (GM), Chris Knight (CK), Chris Quinn (CQ), Damien Butler (DB) and Brendon Clements (BC).

Mitsui - Roger Arnett* (RA) and Matthew Croome* (MC) (joined for General Business only via Zoom.)

APOLOGIES: Michelle Higgins (MH), Dave Moran (DM) and Reg Eveleigh (RE).

The meeting was formerly opened at 9:03am. Due to site COVID-19 protocols, the CCC was held via video conference (Zoom) with a limited number of people attending in person. DO, PB and the Chair attended the meeting in person, as did CK, CQ, DB and BC. *GM and SL joined the meeting via Zoom.

- **Welcome**

- The Chair opened the meeting at 9:03am and welcomed attendees.
- The Chair noted additional attendees for the section on General Business from Mitsui. Mitsui would be presenting an update on a proposed solar farm on land owned by Bloomfield Collieries.

- **Apologies**

- The Chair noted the apologies as above, with condolences to MH.
- The Chair asked those in the room to sign the attendance sheet which also included a COVID-19 health declaration.

- **Declaration of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

- The Chair confirmed her declaration that she is engaged by Bloomfield to chair this meeting and that there were no changes to members' declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests.

- **Business Arising from Previous Minutes (responses to issues raised or provision of information)**

- The Chair noted that the minutes of the previous meeting were finalised and distributed on 17 June 2020. There were five actions from the previous meeting.
- CK advised that information on additional homes with acquisition rights was covered in this meeting as agreed.
- Action two to circulate the Mine Dust and You Fact Sheet was complete.
- Action three concerned additional avenues to circulate community newsletters. This was completed and CK thanked SL for support from Council. DO noted that she had seen the newsletter at Coles.
- Action four was about investigation of koala habitat guidelines. CK noted these were not applicable to existing development approvals. CK gave an overview of the guidelines.

- The final action was the investigation of additional opportunities to support community organisations through COVID-19 by providing PPE. DB noted this action was completed and that Bloomfield's supplies set aside for community organisations had already been allocated.
- CK continued in relation to action one regarding additional mitigation and acquisition afforded under SSD 6300. CK gave an overview of a number of properties including their location, however ownership of those properties was not identified.
- SL asked a question about the black dots on the plan presented. CK noted that these were mine owned properties.

- **Correspondence**

- The correspondence was noted, including prior distribution of the CCC meeting presentation.
- Late items were noted, including how to participate via zoom.
- The Chair noted correspondence from GHD advising that the company had been appointed as independent auditors by the Department of Planning. Part of the audit scope includes liaising with the CCC Chair. The scope of the audit would be sent out and members would need to respond to the Chair if they have any feedback. The Chair continued noting the audit will cover environmental performance, compliance with the consent, review of the adequacy of strategies, measures or actions to improve environmental performance. A teleconference with GHD will be held on 26 October. PB asked who GHD was. PB was advised by the Chair that GHD is a private, independent company. CK noted that GHD had not done project approvals or studies with Rix's Creek Mine.

- **Proponents Reports and Overview of Activities:**

Progress of project:

- CQ commenced the update on the Progress of the Project. He gave an overview of operations, noting that the Fallbrook area continued to be in care and maintenance.

Monitoring and Environmental Performance:

- CQ gave an overview of environment monitoring locations. He noted the new monitoring location at the Burgess residence that was installed for internal operations purposes.
- CQ covered rainfall noting the increase in rain has been supporting the strong rehabilitation work that had been occurring.
- CQ moved to the 2020 Operational Noise overview. He noted the 13 complaints received. The 13 include nine complaints received from one resident. CQ covered the EPA notice to provide information and records from a noise complaint on the 21 June 2020. This was submitted to the EPA on the ninth of September.
- The Chair asked about this complainant and their mitigation/ acquisition rights. CK advised that they are not part of acquisition rights. CK gave further detail on information that had been provided to the resident. CK noted that if anyone has issues that they should go through the appropriate channels.
- On the 2020 blasting overview, CQ talked about the four complaints about blasting. PB asked if the complaints were from people passing by or from local residents. CQ noted they complaints were all from local residents.
- DO asked about the new blast monitoring location at the Burgess residence and if there was monitoring occurring directly across from one another. CK noted the reasons for this and the differences in elevation. CK noted that the installation allowed capture of more data. DO noted issues with the Watling monitor and asked if they had been resolved. CK noted this had been resolved and that there was now a different service provider. DO noted issues with it previously going down. CQ noted the work on maintenance and calibrations and that it operates in real time and is checked prior to every blast.

- SL had questions about the blasts that lead to complaints and if these were the same or different events and how these events are reflected in the ranking categories displayed on the screen. CQ noted it was over pressure and that two complaints were received for the one blast. SL asked if complaints were about fume. CK advised that those levels were low and this was not what the complaint was received for. SL asked if there was three separate blasts and two complaints. CQ noted that the full details were covered later in the presentation.
- CQ moved to air quality monitoring, noting the locations for real-time monitoring. He discussed the four complaints received.
- CQ described result in January where there was low rainfall. He noted that upstream monitoring is higher than downstream.
- CQ noted the focus on air quality in 2020, including the dust management campaign “Bust the Dust” by NSW EPA. Also noted was that NSW Department of Planning conducted offsite surveillance in August where the *“the site appeared to managing operations in accordance with approved management plans and conditions of consent to manage air quality contributions on a high wind day.”*
- CQ gave an update on surface water, noting no complaints were received.
- CQ gave an overview of progressive rehabilitation. He noted the work at the Arties pit.
- CQ advised that the SSD 6300 archeological salvage had been completed. CK provided further information noting the registered aboriginal parties on site for the salvage. PB asked where the recovered artefacts were now kept. CK said there was a nominated keeping place on site and the final destination was to be determined. CK noted the new aboriginal knowledge centre at Pokolbin. SL asked if there were elders on site for the salvage. CK advised that it was six (6) representatives of the registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPS) on the first two days with two RAPS on the final day. CK noted that about 30 parties were registered for the project. RAPS that provided feedback as part of the consultation of the Management and Salvage Plans were invited to be involved in the salvage. He noted the process, some of the photos and said that it was a valuable experience.
- CQ then covered weed management. PB asked if we had Noogoora or Bathurst burr. CQ said there was some Bathurst burr in small amounts.
- Biodiversity Management was then covered by CQ. CQ noted that Rix's Creek had received an extension from DPIE to finalise the Biodiversity Conservation Agreements with the Biodiversity Conservation Division (BCD). In August, RCM received draft agreements from BCD and provided response.
- CQ advised of the upcoming biodiversity audit and monitoring assessments.
- CQ provided an update on the status of management plans and baseline property inspections.
- CQ talked about dog baiting noting that it coincided with work by local land services and other mines. There has been a significant reduction in takes year on year, and the regional coordinated approach is looking like it is effective.

Community Complaints and Response to these Complaints:

- CQ went through complaints received in detail, covering the process of investigation and review which occurs even if the complaint is anonymous.
- He noted the lighting complaint and rectification work. He noted the work on TD2 particularly when there is strong NW winds.
- CK talked about noise complaints and the offsite compliance person who is out monitoring during the night. He noted the predictive tools supported by monitoring in the community helping with early response.
- CK discussed complaint 17 and said that the environment officer was conducting monitoring at that location at the time of the complaint.
- PB asked whether the tailings dam was cause of dust. CQ said it was a contributor. PB noted the balance of trying to dry out the dam and keeping dust down. BC described some of the operational challenges. CQ noted the work done when strong winds were forecast. PB asked how big the dam was. CQ noted it is 50 hectares. PB asked if it could be covered with pool type cover. CK described how the dust management works. DO asked about feasibility studies for a sealant and what had been done to tackle a known problem. CK talked about options that has been investigated including flocculent. CK noted work on spigot lines. He

noted work with drones and the truck that can spray that area, albeit not the entire way. BC talked about how the operations manage it. CK noted how much proactive management occurs.

- CK noted the earlier blast event query SL had. SL asked if the blast went ahead. CK gave an overview of road management approach and the approval provided by Planning to blast within 500m of the highway. SL asked if it was one off. CK confirmed that it is not a one off but that it lasts for 21 years. SL confirmed the complaint was against the application and CK noted confusion by the complainant that it was 500m from Maison Dieu Road. The application related to 500 m from the highway.

Information provided to the community and any feedback:

- CQ noted the community newsletters.
- CK gave an overview of some recent work in the community. He noted work with the hospital and the kids in sport scholarship.

General Business

- CK gave an update on Modification 9.
- Just after 10am, Roger Arnett and Matthew Croome from Mitsui joined the meeting to provide an overview of a proposed solar project to potentially be built on land adjacent to Rix's Creek Mine that is owned by The Bloomfield Group.
- DO advised of her work for AGL and expressed concern about the 'Commercial in Confidence' wording on the presentation. RA advised this was not an issue and that all the information covered was publicly available. RA agree to remove this from the presentation and resend it to members.
- RA gave some background on Mitsui including its presence in Australian markets including the renewable projects.
- RA advised that the project could supply to the mine operations as well as to the grid.
- The project name is Bridgeman Solar Farm. RA provided statistics on the project and its objectives.
- RA gave a summary of key features of the solar farm and noted fencing work that would ensure grazing could continue.
- RA covered a map showing project location. SL asked for clarification on where Bridgeman Road was. SL asked if the solar farm would be visible from Bridgeman Road. RA said that the intention is that it is not visible.
- RA noted the economic benefits of construction including 50 jobs during construction and three to five jobs once completed.
- RA gave an overview of stakeholder engagement noting liaison with nearby neighbours.
- MC added that on community consultation, Mitsui hadn't communicated locally until recently because the prefeasibility study was occurring. MC talked about visual impacts and that the reason they waited until recently was because they wanted to be able to clearly describe any visual impacts.
- DO asked how much land is required to reach 5 megawatts of power. MC advised that 2.5 hectares was required per megawatt. MC talked more about the infrastructure.
- DO asked about dust in the area and the efficacy of dust films on the panels. MC noted solar was constructed in much dustier areas and noted that the surface of the panels was designed to be able to shed any dust. He noted panels needed to be monitored and periodically cleaned. He noted the close proximity to the mine that the mine could provide good data to understand the potential impact of dust on the panels.
- SL thanked Mitsui for the presentation and said news of the project was good to hear. SL noted that Council is eager to encourage development of alternative energy. SL asked about equity partners and if they were large partners or if there was community involvement as shareholders.
- MC noted any Joint Venture is typically with other large corporates. He noted other projects that have community equity. He noted that community equity for this project hadn't yet been explored and that at this stage the plan is for Mitsui to fully own the project.

- The Chair asked about being advised when the project was on exhibition. MC noted further exhibition would occur when there is a development application.
 - SL had more questions, noting other renewable projects going through the approval process. SL asked if other projects will impact feasibility of the project and what the timeframe to get it operational is.
 - MC advised that Mitsui does not currently believe there are significant projects in very close proximity. Mitsui believe the grid is very strong and that the timeline depends on a few factors. MC advised construction was aimed to commence in mid-2021 with completion early 2022, however that timeframe was dependent on a number of factors.
 - SL asked about the length of the construction phase. MC advised it can be as little as six months but typically is around one year. He noted the site is undulating and that it has more challenges than just a dead flat area.
 - PB asked about component manufacture, where this would occur and impacts on the rail loop. MC advised that most electrical equipment will come from overseas. Panels would also come from overseas. MC noted what could be supplied locally including cabling and steel frames that support the panels. MC said that there is no impact on the rail loop.
 - The Mitsui presentation concluded and RA and MC left the meeting.
 - The chair asked if there was other general business.
 - SL had no other questions but thanked RCM for assisting with the Council's COVID-19 relief measures. SL noted the "Spend in Singleton" cards.
 - DO advised that she had other matters to raise.
 - DO asked if solar infrastructure will impact the closure plans of RCN and if it needed to be a Modification. CK noted that the project is in no way related to the current consent. DO asked if the transmission plant would go to Mitsui. CK said he believed it would be Mitsui's own transmission yard.
 - DO asked how long care and maintenance would occur in Fallbrook. CK confirmed it would occur until 2024. DO asked if there was a policy on how long a mine could be in care in maintenance. CK said he was not aware that there was.
 - DO asked about the Biodiversity Trust. DO asked if credits for Rix's Creek North were purchased. CK noted credits for RCN are detailed in the consent. He advised that everything is done and that it just requires the conservation agreement to be finalised with the Biodiversity Conservation Trust. He said that Planning hold a substantial bond. He noted that the Apple Tree Flats offsets matter had been resolved. CK advised that National Parks and Wildlife now own and manage that area. CK noted that the RCN offset area had been a legacy issue with Ausgrid easements across the area.
 - DO asked to be advised when the biodiversity trust will be sorted. CK noted this.
 - PB asked who owns the conservation area. CK advised that the group owned the land and that unlike international companies Bloomfield do not have to divest ownership of land because they are Australian owned.
 - DO asked for photos of the biodiversity area. CK committed to provide a briefing of areas including outcomes of surveys. DO noted it was important to be able to see these.
 - DO expressed concern about credit systems. DO is worried that people don't know enough about how land is looked after. CK talked about land management including weed management, site inspections for pests, baiting, removal of any rubbish and removing non-required fencing. He noted the large amount of funds that go to managing biodiversity areas.
 - The Chair reminded attendees that the meeting was not recorded despite the microphone on the table for video-conferencing.
- **Next Meeting**
 - The Chair noted the May/October schedule (26 May and 20 October) and the need to clarify the start time. It was agreed the meeting would start at 9am.
 - SL advised that she cannot attend the October meeting. Council elections will be in September and SL will not be standing because she has moved outside the LGA. SL confirmed attendance at the May 2021 meeting.
 - The meeting closed at 10:45am. The Chair thanked members for their contribution and as this was the last meeting for 2020, wished them all the best for the Christmas period.

Action items

Item	Action	Responsibility
1	Circulate Mitsui presentation	DB
2	Provide biodiversity presentation at the next CCC	CK