



**Mt Arthur Coal (MAC)  
Community Consultative Committee (CCC) Meeting  
Wednesday 20 November 2024**

**Attendance**

**Chairperson**

Dr. W.E.J Paradise (WP)

Independent Chair

**Community Representatives**

Jennifer Lecky (JL)

Community Representative

Lavinia Hutchinson (LH)

Community Representative

Claire Quigley (CQ)

Community Representative

Di Gee (DG)

Community Representative

**Stakeholder Representatives**

De-Anne Douglas (DD)

CEO Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC)

**Muswellbrook Shire Council (MSC)**

Theresa Folpp (TF)

Muswellbrook Shire Council

**Company Representatives**

Katie Bennett (KB)

Principal Communications

Amanda Irwin (AI)

Communications and Community Specialist

Jelinda Millgate (JM)

Principal Community

Jimmy Nixon (JN)

Superintendent Environment

**By Invitation**

Will Rifkin (WR)

Professor, The University of Newcastle

Sam Spur (SS)

Associate Professor, The University of Newcastle

**Apologies**

Amanda Walker

Manager Corporate Affairs

Sarah Bailey

Manager Land Access, Approvals & Heritage

**Minutes**

Sarah Purser (SP)

1. **Acknowledgement of Country;** led by JM.

2. **Welcome & Apologies**

WP opened the meeting at 9.07 a.m. welcoming all in attendance.

MAC representatives; Katie Bennet and Amanda Irwin were introduced to the group.

3. **Declaration of Pecuniary Interest**

*Standing;* WP is remunerated for Chairing the meeting, as is SP for taking the minutes.

4. **Minutes of the previous Meeting held 14 August 2024**

WP confirmed the minutes had been circulated and have been approved as a true and accurate record, the minutes are available on the company website.

**Matters Arising**

**WP to liaise with AW regarding interest expressed by two parties to join the MAC CCC that had been in response to the company's Community Newsletter.**

✓ Addressed by WP in the Report by Chair at today's meeting.

**WP to provide LH with contact details for the DPHI representative for the MAC CCC.**

✓ Actioned by WP.

## 5. Report from the Chair - Wej Paradice

WP advised of LH's resignation from the MAC CCC and asked that an expression of thanks from the MAC CCC to LH for her involvement and contribution to this forum be put on record. LH responded that she was thankful for the opportunity to be involved with the MAC CCC, noting it is an important time to be working with the company. LH provided the context behind her decision to resign noting there is an increasing expectation for community to provide their insights to industry and this has now expanded to Energy Companies with the transition to renewables.

LH noted that the question had been asked about community representatives being paid to contribute to the CCC's. WP acknowledged the communities position and confirmed this has been raised with the DPHI. In terms of payment there is detail around cost recovery within the DPHI CCC Guidelines. It was acknowledged that if a funding mechanism was developed for community representatives to be paid this would need to be a specific policy from the DPHI to ensure consistency across all CCC's.

JL has been a representative on the CCC's for some 30 years and she finds joy in seeing how mining has progressed to where it is today. JL participates in the CCC's to ensure information shared reaches the community and would not feel comfortable to be paid for this. WP noted a set policy across the CCC's would negate the need for members and proponents to make those financial decisions. WP will continue to take this matter up with other Chairpersons as he believe this feedback is reflected by the difficulty in recruiting new members to join the CCC's

WP advised that Professor Will Rifkin and Associate Professor Sam Spur will join today's meeting to provide an overview of the Hunter Valley Social Scientists (HVSS) group and the work they want to undertake. WP acknowledged the work BHP has undertaken with Icen, who provided an update at the August CCC Meeting on the key elements that have been put forward as priorities.

## 7. Pathway to 2030 - Closure Legacy Expectations Assessment (CLEA) Update - Katie Bennett

**MAC MOD 2030;** This modification is under review by the DPHI and MAC hope to receive an outcome in early 2025.

**Workforce;** MAC have launched their NSW Workforce Transition and Support Policy which is an overarching framework for their employees.

**Education offering;** In response to feedback from employees that re-training is of importance to them, MAC will provide reimbursement to those engaging in study to support their career pathways. KB noted that there is a broad range of study included and this is available to all BHP employees that have been in the business for one year. JL asked if employees are still doing 12 hours shifts as she was concerned that might impact on their ability to also study. MAC confirmed that employees will be given study leave.

**Financial advice;** Approximately 300 MAC employees have taken up this offer with Mine Super with advice covering matters such as savings plans and superannuation, this support package remains open.

**Jobs Expo in September 2024;** MAC attended this event held at the Donald Horne Building along with TAFE, the University and other transition organisations. KB noted there had been good representation and the key element for MAC was to ensure there was an understanding that the company is working on strategies now to prepare the workforce and enable them to make decisions well before 2030.

**Iceni;** MAC anticipate the launch of Iceni's Report with a playback to community, inclusive of the CCC, to be in December 2024. This will include detail of some key events that MAC will be doing in the next 12 months and beyond.

**Land reuse after mining;** A review of potential land use is continuing and remains in the very early phases. There has been a lot of discussions around the potential for Pumped Hydro and MAC are investigating this to see if that is feasible and how it might work. That work is very comprehensive and no decisions have been made as yet.

**Supplier / Contractor Forum;** MAC conducted a workshop on 19 November 2024 where they provided initiatives to suppliers and contractors that might be helpful to them in the lead up to 2030.

**Visual amenity opportunity;** One of MAC's key projects for 2025 is to look at opportunities to engage community, stakeholders and MAC's own people to visit the site to see and learn about rehabilitated areas. JN noted the opportunity to complete some planting activities and this can be done in areas that the community care about. TF acknowledged the value of this, particularly if MAC could provide some education around the aims of ecosystem repair. TF felt this would also be very worthwhile for school students.

**Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAP's) Land Use;** Expression of Interest to join in-person consultation sessions for the Indigenous Community to be involved on this Land Access project has gone out to RAPs and been advertised in the Hunter River Times. KB explained this is in relation to potential land that MAC could dedicate for Cultural use where people can come together to celebrate cultural practices.

JM noted these feedback sessions will be with Liam Lawford who is engaged by MAC as the Indigenous Engagement Specialist. DD noted that Liam is accepted and appreciated in the Aboriginal community for the work he does. DD commended BHP for having employed the right person to connect with the Aboriginal community, noting that Liam is a very good role model. JM confirmed that Liam will be the main point of contact for this consultation and will coordinate the engagement.

**Communications;** MAC sent a Community Newsletter to 12,000 homes in August and are working on a Facebook page specifically for NSW with the hope to launch this in the New Year. MAC will also be looking at an External Facing Campaign around transition and closure and KB would like to present those communication strategies to the CCC.

## **8. Reports from Community / Stakeholder Group Representatives**

### **Lavinia Hutchinson - Community Representative**

LH is increasingly talking to investors that are looking into and talking about Solar, Wind and Hydro. LH asked if these parties are interested in connecting with MAC how would she best direct their enquiries. MAC responded that questions or comments for the Pathway team can be directed via email to [NSWEC.community@bhp.com](mailto:NSWEC.community@bhp.com), or via an online form to the Transition and Closure Team via their website; <https://www.bhp.com/what-we-do/global-locations/australia/nsw-mt-arthur-coal-mine-hunter-valley/mt-arthur-coal-pathway>

LH has found a common thread within the small business supply chain being at high risk of not understanding that they need to start transitioning and where to go to receive the support they will need to do this. LH credited MAC for instigating their Workforce Transition and Support plans, noting her concern is more for business' around town that might be indirectly impacted by MAC's closure.

During small business month, as a business partner, LH ran five sessions with over 500 people participating. LH delivered on community engagement and CQ delivered on diversification. LH acknowledged AGL for coming on board as a sponsor.

LH expressed difficulty in securing the Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce as an auspice to deliver workshops, she noted there seems to be a focus on visitor economy initiatives and LH would like to see the Chamber engage in business development opportunities.

With regard to support for small business LH acknowledged that Muswellbrook Shire Council (MSC) had provided some initiatives. LH feels that the Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce and MSC would be the two main bodies involved in this area. TF advised she is on the MSC internal working group for the Community Strategic Plan, so will take LH's comments away for consideration.

MAC noted that the company works with their own supply chain to assist them to develop and plan for the future. During a recent Supplier Forum MAC had asked the supply chain what support they wanted and training had not been a key response.

LH finds that a lot of business do not understand what they need i.e. to build Capability Statements so they are able to do MAC's procurement process on line, and to also recognise new pathways in relation to their own workforce, transferable skills and services.

LH receives a lot of enquiries about how to access funding. LH feels a lot of potential funding is not being secured due to some people needing assistance to prepare and submit their sponsorship applications.

From recent work CQ gleaned that local small business are in the doing stage right now, their vision tends to be for the next twelve months and there is not the capacity to see that longer term view i.e. to 2030. CQ concurs with LH that there is a gap in terms of business in the local community understanding how to plan for the future and what is the right support for them to access i.e. be it socials or one on one. CQ feels bigger conversations need to be had around why are you diversifying and who are you targeting.

LH has found the word "transition" too big for small business to comprehend. LH tends to use the term "low risk diversification in your business" when talking about how a business can transfer their services to another industry whilst still supporting mining.

### **Claire Quigley - Community Representative**

CQ provided an overview of attendees and feedback received from the Hunter Innovation Festival in relation to energy projects and renewable options. CQ noted there had been a strong focus on opportunities for business in the town and region to harness the knowledge and infrastructure already available into new energy opportunities. CQ acknowledged MSC for their support with this Festival.

At an appropriate time CQ would like MAC to share some of their stories via the Hunter iF platform. CQ noted Hunter iF has a strong network in the region and will be holding a number of events in 2025. CQ felt it would be great to have BHP there as part of the conversation around their direction towards 2030 and translate that into tangible things. MAC confirmed they were open to that engagement and CQ will advise the Hunter iF plans for 2025.

### **De-Anne Douglas - Stakeholder Group Representative - CEO Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council**

DD advised members that a Corroboree will be held on Saturday 23 November 2024 at Weeraman Fields, noting this would be held by an amazing group that provide a great Cultural experience. DD acknowledged that BHP are a sponsor and said this is a good opportunity for all of community to come together.

The LALC has secured funding to build the Wanaruah Land Keeping Place which will provide an opportunity to expand programs for the community. The LALC have a goal to build up at the Muswellbrook Common which will be given an Aboriginal name. The plan is for LALC to progress to being self reliant i.e. to have their own bush tucker produce. LALC have commenced a land carers program to be able to work on their lands and support other people in the community.

DD will be running Blackroo's Christmas Day Lunch to be held at the Senior Citizens and Community Centre in Muswellbrook from 12 noon to 2.00 p.m. DD noted this is not just for those that may be struggling financially, this is also for those that may be alone and provides an opportunity for people to feel like they are part of something. DD thanked all that have supported this event in the past.

### **Jennifer Lecky - Community Representative**

JL noted that when she had first come to Muswellbrook, the town had a very good Piano Teacher and the music was astounding. JL had said "We should start a Conservatorium" and this is a reality now with unbelievable musical performances. JL noted the Conservatorium has good attendance and brilliant teachers. JL would like to see some thoughts directed towards art as well. JL commended MAC on their rehabilitation, she had been taken to have a look and felt the results had been brilliant.

### **Di Gee - Community Representative**

DG queried if MAC advertise for CCC members in local School and/or Hall Community Newsletters as she would tend to read these over a newspaper. WP confirmed that the advertising can go out in a range of different ways and if those committees were willing to take a notification the CCC could pursue that. DG felt it would be good to get those smaller communities a bit more involved and JN acknowledged that would definitely reach a different audience.

## **9. Report from Muswellbrook Shire Council**

TF confirmed that MSC has elected their new Councillors. DD advised Council will hold a meeting on 21 November 2024 to determine who represents what committees. The group congratulated DD on her appointment as Deputy Mayor of MSC and wished her well in that role.

## **10. Land Management and Environment by Jimmy Nixon**

### **Rehabilitation and Land Management**

The rehabilitation target for FY25 is 135 hectares, most of the focus is on Saddlers North at the southern end of the mine. Weed treatment continues to be predominantly on the maintenance of FY24 rehabilitation areas. MAC completed a feral dog management program in line with the LLS spring program.

### **Environmental Monitoring Results (1 July to 30 September 2024)**

JN provided an overview of MAC's Environmental Monitoring in relation to Air Quality, Water, Blast and Operational Noise, noting that detail is provided to the CCC in the Meeting Pre-Read.

LH noted there has and continues to be concerns within the community in relation to the earthquake activity and asked if MAC could share any feedback. KB confirmed that MAC did put out a statement and will place a spotlight in their next Newsletter as they understand this remains on people's minds.

**ACTION 1: MAC's official statement in relation to the earthquake activity to be circulated to the CCC.**

JN confirmed that the EPA and other Regulators had been in touch with MAC to check that the earthquake activity did not cause any environmental issues. JN advised that MAC have good systems in place to react to those conditions. JN added that Geoscience Australia now have monitors around the region so there is Government monitoring being undertaken.

**Dust Management Presentation - Jimmy Nixon - Superintendent Environment**

- ✓ Presentation circulated to members with the Minutes from today's meeting

JN noted that MAC have completed many undertakings to improve their dust monitoring platform. This includes MAC implementing many of their own initiatives which are above and beyond EPA and Government requirements, for example; incorporating GPS fleet data to predict future dust levels.

**By Invitation - Professor Will Rifkin and Associate Professor Sam Spurr**

WP confirmed the MAC CCC had endorsed the Hunter Valley Social Scientists (HVSS) application to the NSW Office of the Chief Scientist and Engineer to convene a conference in January 2025. WP welcomed Will Rifkin (WF) and Sam Spurr (SS) in attendance at today's meeting to provide an overview of the HVSS research and to seek input from community regarding perceptions of what they see to be the priorities.

WR provided an overview of the work HVSS has undertaken. WR noted the experience gained by HVSS Academics in relation to investigating transitions can add value to other regions, specifically the Hunter Region. SS noted that the HVSS are happy to share their findings on an ongoing basis with the MAC CCC or other organisations that might appreciate these insights.

HVSS are looking for what are the issues and opportunities that they, as Social Scientists, are to be investigating over the coming five to ten years. WP asked if members would like to provide feedback from a community perspective.

LH advised that community are experiencing engagement fatigue and wanting to know where they can go for trusted information. WF acknowledged that is what his colleagues are recording and thanked LH for her valuable feedback. LH believes that the University is in a good position to bring everything together via facts and research.

CQ sees the need for diversity of engagement as there is a tendency to go to the same people. CQ felt that including more small business owners in the region that are part of the supply chain would be beneficial. CQ noted the value of youth to see through the eyes of those that will be working in the future. CQ would like the non physical assets to be identified such as; the networks that are in place, unique brands, what makes this area different to other regions, and what makes up the Upper Hunter, so these can be linked and leveraged as a community.

KB queried if the HVSS had anything to ask from BHP and WR responded that he feels the HVSS will need to provide an outline and briefing on the work they will be undertaking to MAC and will follow this up with KB. This will be for HVSS to provide their sense of what is going on right now and what HVSS will be trying to pull together in January 2025 and then detail the kind of input they could use from BHP.

From a personal perspective TF noted that change has been occurring in society forever and it seems that there is so much fear and anxiety around it now. TF has been disappointed to see the fear, anxiety, infighting and anger that has been expressed on social media.

TF noted the use of the term transition, but there seems to be a lack of definition as to what the region is transitioning to. WP acknowledged that MAC had worked to gain an understanding from community about some of those transitioning issues via their engagement of Icen. WP feels there is a lot happening in the Upper Hunter with many mines and developments being at different phases and pathways. With this sort of transitioning of the Upper Hunter and in terms of cumulative impacts, WP feels a helicopter view looking down at all the different operations will assist to ascertain what this will mean over the next 10 to 20 years for the community in terms of the social, economic and environmental aspects. WP sees value in gaining authoritative facts for people to talk about in relation to the future of the region and to provide an understanding of where that is going.

SS acknowledged WP's comment about cumulative impacts, the University will take up the role of stepping back and looking into this in a holistic way. SS noted the HVSS is very vested in playing that role for the community and region. WR acknowledged TF's feedback, noting it is not just the size or speed of change and that TF is correct in stating that mines have been closed in past history. The HVSS hope to be intermediaries and identify where people should be talking to each other and getting that helicopter view.

On behalf of MAC JM thanked members for all their assistance throughout the year and for taking the time to attend the CCC Meetings and be part of this forum. JM presented the CCC with a book called "102 Things to Do with a Hole in the Ground", noting this to be a really interesting read that she hopes might inspire everyone for what might be possible for Muswellbrook beyond 2030.

### **13. Next Meetings on Site at Mt Arthur Coal**

12 February 2025  
14 May 2025  
13 August 2025  
19 November 2025

### **14. Meeting Close;**

WP closed the Meeting at 11.17 a.m. thanking members for their participation and contribution to the MAC CCC during 2024. WP noted that LH will be missed by the group and LH was thanked by all for being part of this forum. WP wished all a Merry Christmas and he looks forward to seeing everyone again in the New Year.

#### **Action Arising**

ACTION 1: MAC's official statement in relation to the earthquake activity to be circulated to the CCC.

#### **Action Carried Forward**

MAC to advise when the Public Exhibition period is known for the EPBC Referral documentation.  
In progress - no updates from DEECW at the time of today's CCC meeting.