



**Mt Arthur Coal (MAC)  
Community Consultative Committee (CCC) Meeting  
Wednesday 14 February 2024**

Attendance

**Chairperson**

Dr. W.E.J Paradise (WP)

Independent Chair MAC CCC

**Community Representatives**

Jennifer Lecky (JL)

Community Representative

Lavinia Hutchinson (LH)

Community Representative

Di Gee (DG)

Community Representative

**Muswellbrook Shire Council (MSC)**

Theresa Folpp (TF)

Muswellbrook Shire Council

**Company Representatives**

Grant Clouten (GC)

General Manager

Sarah Bailey (SB)

Manager Land Access, Approvals & Heritage

Ray Marten (RM)

Principal, Approvals

Amanda Walker (AW)

Manager Corporate Affairs

Jimmy Nixon (JN)

Superintendent Environment

**Minutes**

Sarah Purser

1. **Acknowledgement of Country;** led by MAC.
2. **Welcome & Apologies;** WP opened the meeting at 9.05 a.m. welcoming all the first MAC CCC Meeting for 2024 and thanking members for their attendance. There were no apologies for today's meeting.
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 9 November 2023;** WP confirmed the minutes had been circulated, he asked if members had any matters to raise, nil were put forward and the Meeting Minutes were accepted at today's meeting as being a true and accurate record, MAC will upload to their website.
5. **Matters Arising**

**Action Arising;** WP to make contact with Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce to explain the role of the MAC CCC and ascertain if they could share detail of the current Community and Stakeholder vacancies via their regular Newsletter.

**ACTION 1:** AW to prepare an advertisement calling for Community and Stakeholder representatives for the MAC CCC. WP to provide this to the Chamber of Commerce.

**ACTION 2:** AW to confirm MAC's official company representatives for the CCC.

**Action Arising;** WP to circulate the Code of Conduct Form for CCC sign off and return to Chair

- ✓ Completed; WP emailed to members 29 November 2023. WP offered to provide a hard copy should that be preferred by any members.

6. **Report from the Chair - Wej Paradise;** WP advised that he had received two applications for new members to join the MAC CCC and they had seemed to fit the criteria in terms of what is required. WP explained the process of on-boarding new members via the DPE in accordance with the new CCC Guidelines. WP was hopeful that these new members may be appointed prior to the next Meeting scheduled for 15 May 2024.

## 7. Operations Update - Grant Clouten

Reporting Period: FY23/24 Q2 October to December 2023

### Safety

GC advised that MAC is tracking under last year's result and doing well from a safety point of view. GC explained that a current focus for MAC is to reduce low level injuries that tend to be repeatable.

### Production

GC acknowledged the wet weather impacts that MAC had experienced over the previous few years. GC advised production is going well and attributed this, in part, to the drier weather conditions. MAC had set up their business for this period and are now reaching their goals. YTD from a dirt and coal perspective MAC are ahead and the business is structurally doing well.

### People

MAC have on-boarded 70 people over the last three months and continue to work towards getting employees into BHP shirts to bring a sense of ownership. Staff turnover is quite low and on-boarding people continues. A primary focus for MAC is training those new to the industry.

### Forecast

Exceeds targets in terms of end coal and MAC are already looking ahead to 2025 and 2026. MAC continues to focus on efficiencies in response to rising expenses. GC advised the business is in a healthy position and steady state.

### Rehabilitation

MAC are required to do progressive rehab and are averaging 100 hectares per annum. MAC's goal is to continue to extract and process coal until the consent lapses on 30 June 2030, then will move to a solely rehab phase. MAC are currently working through how long the rehab phase will take, including the workforce and equipment that will be required, and will get to a point in understanding that.

With regard to potential for underground mining; it was noted that some 10 years ago MAC had put in a portal to investigate underground measures. The business made the decision that was not economical for BHP to pursue, therefore the portal has been sealed and dirt placed there.

There was a general discussion around a local workforce ratio estimate of 2/3rds and it was questioned how far away is considered to be local. It was acknowledged that employment of locals is of great interest to the community and a subject matter that comes up at many of the regional CCC's. GC believes that MAC leans toward engaging more on the local side with a large number of employees coming from the Singleton and Muswellbrook areas. MAC do promote living local and have policies around employees living more than one hour from site.

MAC noted their Social Impact Assessment would be a good resource for sourcing detail around employment data and this is can be found on MAC's website. JN added Social Impact Assessments may be a good document to access the same information for other mine sites, noting the demographic profile will change for each of them.

MAC's Social Impact Assessment can be found here [getContent \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

Please refer to document pages 13 and 14 - Workforce - Point 3.2.2.

## 8. Exploration Update by Sarah Bailey

SB advised that MAC will renew two Exploration Licences for a period of time to enable the company to ensure historic rehabilitation is completed satisfactorily prior to commencing the process of relinquishment of tenements. SB explained it is important to understand that just because MAC hold an EL, this does not mean it is for mining, in these cases it is for rehab.

## 9. Land Management and Environment by Jimmy Nixon

JN provided detailed updates on:-

- ✓ Rehabilitation
- ✓ Land Management
- ✓ Environmental Monitoring Results; Air Quality, Water, Blast and Operational Noise
- ✓ Environmental Incidents and EPA Site Inspections.

In terms of production ceasing at MAC, it was queried if that would lead to a considerable reduction of potential dust. MAC responded that monitoring will be conducted for the rehabilitation period as the company will still be moving dirt in that phase. The movement of trucks on roads, dumping and shaping will also continue.

MAC will need to do the work beyond 2030 to see that, inclusive of cumulative modelling that goes into this assessment, but did confirm the intensity will drop as MAC will not be transporting coal to the Prep Plant, nor moving material on stock piles.

MAC has completed, and therefore complied with, all annual reporting requirements under licence conditions. These reports are available to view on the BHP website using the following link:

<https://www.bhp.com/environment/regulatory-information#>

## 10. MAC MOD 2030 Approval - Sarah Bailey and Ray Marten

### MOD 2030 Project Status Update

#### Project Status Update

- ✚ Social impact assessment consultation covering a broad spectrum of stakeholders
- ✚ Modification Report submitted September 2023
- ✚ Public Exhibition period ended 20 November 2023
- ✚ Thirteen Public Submissions Received (including four objections, four in support, five comments)
- ✚ All Agency Submissions received by January 2024
- ✚ HVEC are currently preparing the Response To Submissions Report – anticipated for end of March submission.
- ✚ EPBC Referral is currently being prepared for submission end of February 2024

In response to a query as to the status of an original land claim that was a Section 10 Application, MAC advised that an Independent Reporter has prepared a report which has been provided to all stakeholders, including land owners. The Independent Reporter has made recommendation to the Minister that a Section 10 is not required because the area is already protected in perpetuity, this matter now awaits the Ministers final determination.

With regard to project milestones, MAC are currently at the "Response to submissions on Modification Report". To follow in 2024-2025 is the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) assessment of Modification Report and submissions, and DPE's Determination of the application. Final step will be the Federal Minister's Determination.

**EPBC Referral Overview;** MAC advised they will submit their referral to the EPBC towards the end of February 2024. Following steps will be for MAC to participate in the assessment process prior to receiving the assessment decision.

### **Background - Existing EPBC Approvals for MAC**

- ✚ Mt Arthur Coal Mine is approved under two EPBC Approvals; Consolidation (Extension) Project (EPBC 2011/5866) and Open Cut Modification (EPBC 2014/7377), both these Approvals expire on 30 June 2026. Administrative amendments to the expiry dates will be sought, following approval of MOD 2. MAC identified the EPBC approval areas via mapping and provided an overview on the history of each of these.

In response to a query regarding the Open Cut Modification, SB advised that this approval resulted in 240 hectares of disturbance. MAC was required to find offsets to satisfy both State and Federal Governments and these parcels of land were all secured under Conservation Agreements.

WP asked if MAC were responsible for monitoring the conservation areas and SB confirmed that is correct, Conservation Agreements are currently legally binding and registered on Title. The obligation runs with the land so whoever owns the land will be responsible. In response to a query from WP, MAC confirmed that all offsets are on land that the company owns.

There was a general discussion around what was considered to be "lost land". This has been of concern to community for a number years in relation to conservation areas in the State being locked up so that people are not able to access them to enjoy their beauty and use for recreational purposes. JN advised that a previous operation he was engaged with had worked with Government to allow bird watchers to access land and do surveys, he feels these access arrangements can be achieved but acknowledged risk and liability are a big issue.

### **The Modification - Key Findings**

#### **Biodiversity**

- ✚ There are no Areas of Outstanding Biodiversity Value listed under the Biodiversity Conservation Regulation associated with the Action area.

#### **EPBC Referral Status Update and Timing**

- ✚ The initial pre lodgement meeting with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) was held on 6 November 2023. The Referral documentation has been finalised and lodgement is anticipated for 20 February 2024. The DCCEEW will determine a Public Exhibition period. MAC anticipate approval around 30 June 2025.

**ACTION 3: MAC to advise the CCC when the Public Exhibition period is known for the EPBC Referral documentation.**

#### **Recap Overview of MAC MOD 2030**

- ✚ Four year extension of mining activities beyond 30 June 2026
- ✚ Mining to occur within existing Mining Leases, no new mining tenure required
- ✚ Reduction in the approved mining rate from 32 Mtpa ROM to a max of 25 Mtpa ROM (similar to historic production)
- ✚ Reduction in maximum total coal rail transportation from 27 Mtpa to 20 Mtpa
- ✚ Minor extension of pit beyond the current disturbance limit
- ✚ No requirement to develop the approved southern out of pit emplacement and other ancillary infrastructure areas
- ✚ Net reduction of the approved disturbance by 377 hectares
- ✚ Revised void configuration

## 11. Pathway to 2030 Update - Amanda Walker

AW noted that MAC had previously provided the CCC with an overview of their Tomorrow, Together Program. AW advised that 1,103 one on one interviews had been completed, with three key themes emerging:-

1. Financial advice
2. Retraining and skills
3. Rehabilitation, in particular jobs that may become available for this work

### Financial Advice

MAC has partnered with Mine Super to provide agnostic financial advice to their employees in the following three step format:-

- ✓ Group sessions at Muswellbrook and Singleton
- ✓ One-on-one scoping sessions to identify financial planning needs
- ✓ One-on-one advice based on individual circumstances

### Retraining and Skills

It was noted that people are interested in what will be available for them if their role finishes at BHP, whether it be to continue in mining, or looking at diversifying into other employment opportunities. GC advised that MAC has conducted a "State of the Nation" with crews with the aim to ascertain an agreed skills base on how the workforce will leave. MAC are now working on what that policy will look like.

MAC advised this is very much around individual journeys and pathways, and will come down to what industries the workforce are interested in. GC noted there may be some who might just want an additional ticket to work at another mine site, whereas others might see this as an opportunity to retrain into a different career, such as becoming a School Teacher or working in the Medical Field, in which case MAC are looking to support those undergoing recognised training courses to do so. It was agreed that it would be great if those changing careers remained in Muswellbrook, for example as a Doctor.

Once MAC have gone through this process with their employees, they will have that data to feedback to the Community, Council and Chamber of Commerce. MAC did note the importance of understanding that what people want now is likely to change, so there will be a number of touch points to check in with personnel in the lead up to 2030.

**ACTION 4: MAC to share insights into feedback from employees regarding remaining within the mining industry and/or potential career changes post 2030.**

### Rehabilitation

MAC advised that the specialist rehabilitation work that is currently contracted out will likely remain outsourced, however MAC may conduct works such as bulk shaping and the like. The numbers required for the rehab work will change over 5, 10 and 15 years and there will be differing rosters on offer. As more is known MAC will communicate with staff that are interested in rehab work, so people can start planning.

- **Community Engagement Events** were held on 30 November 2023 at Muswellbrook Race Course, followed by an online option on 7 December 2023, inclusive of an update from Liz Watts and the Transition and Closure Planning Team.
- **Closure Legacy Expectations Assessment (CLEA)**; MAC have completed this process which was delivered in partnership with Icen. The CLEA involved 40 stakeholder interviews, community surveys, focus groups and workshops to refine feedback and covered subject matters such as what people think BHP's legacy should

be when no longer mining and what people want the community to look like. MAC hope to have a good report from this for community, noting the feedback gained will influence their Forward Work Plans.

➤ **"My Muswellbrook" social research project conducted by the University of Newcastle**

Includes; mapping place identity with groups of 10 people representing various parts of the community e.g. senior citizens, school aged youth and multicultural groups. MAC hopes to obtain a good base line of data from these interactions on what residents love about Muswellbrook.

From all of these engagements, MAC will look at what they can do to support the community in achieving their desired outcomes for Muswellbrook. MAC want to leave a positive legacy and will need to determine what those may be from this feedback.

MAC noted this most likely will be in partnership with others to ensure viability for when MAC is no longer operating and there was a general discussion around other potential funding for some of the opportunities that may be put forward by community.

All Modification documentation can be found at:-

[Mt Arthur Coal MOD 2 \(Pathway to 2030\) | Planning Portal - Department of Planning and Environment \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

## 12. Reports from Community Members and Muswellbrook Council

The following subject matters were raised and discussed by the CCC.

✚ **Research Paper by Myles Egan et all 2023**

The emotional geographies of a coal mining transition: a case study of Singleton, New South Wales.

✚ **Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce**

MAC confirmed they are happy to present detail around what operations and potential workforce careers may look like post 2023. MAC will also make sure their update Newsletter is submitted to the Chamber, anticipated for end March 2024.

✚ **Transition to Renewables i.e. Solar and Wind Farms**

General discussion around upcoming renewable projects, communication with community and land owners, and industry governance.

## 13. General Business

Nil put forward.

## 14. Next Meeting - 15 May 2024

**Proposed future 2024 Meeting Dates:-**

- 14 August
- 20 November

## 15. Meeting Close

WP closed the meeting at 11.12 a.m. thanking all for their attendance.

### Actions Arising from this Meeting

**ACTION 1:** AW to prepare an advertisement calling for Community and Stakeholder representatives for the MAC CCC. WP to provide this to the Chamber of Commerce.

**ACTION 2:** AW to confirm MAC's official company representatives for the CCC.

**ACTION 3:** MAC to advise the CCC when the Public Exhibition period is known for the EPBC Referral documentation.

**ACTION 4:** MAC to share insights into feedback from employees regarding remaining within the mining industry and/or potential career changes post 2030.

### Presentations on offer for 2024 MAC CCC Meetings

#### Outputs from the Pathway to 2030 Tomorrow, Together Program

✓ Presented by Amanda Walker at the 14 February 2024 Meeting

 Monitoring Systems for dust management and how MAC calculate site / other contributors - Jimmy Nixon.

 3 Yearly Independent Environmental Audit Summary Report - Jimmy Nixon

 Biodiversity Offset Land Management - Mark Nolan

 Heritage Property Update - Jimmy Nixon