

**DARTBROOK COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES – 19 June 2024**

ATTENDEES:		
Lisa Andrews	LA	Independent Chairperson
Annette Rahn	AR	Community Representative
Tony Lonergan	TL	Community Representative
Paul Smith	PS	Upper Hunter Shire Council (UHSC) Representative
Theresa Folpp	TF	Muswellbrook Shire Council (MSC) Representative
Jeff Beatty	JB	Dartbrook Operations Head of Operational Services
Geoff Mackenzie	GM	Dartbrook Operations HSEC Manager
Ian Crawford	IC	Dartbrook Operations HSEC Co-ordinator
Theo Renard	TR	AQC (Observer)
James Bailey	JBA	James Bailey & Associates
Dorian Walsh	DW	James Bailey & Associates
APOLOGIES:		
Arthur Mitchell	AM	Community Representative
Jennifer Lecky	JL	MSC Councillor
Allison McPhee	AMC	UHSC Councillor
De-Anne Douglas	DD	Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council

1. INTRODUCTION & APOLOGIES:

- 1.1 The meeting was opened by LA at 09:01.
- 1.2 The above apologies were noted. Introductions were made, including IC, who has joined Dartbrook since the previous meeting and would be replacing GM on the CCC.

2. DECLARATIONS

- 2.1 LA made a declaration in relation to her appointed role as Independent Chair to the CCC and confirmed the process for any declarations from CCC members.

3. PREVIOUS MINUTES

- 3.1 LA confirmed that final minutes of the previous CCC meeting were sent out on 9 April 2024.

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

- 4.1 LA noted the actions arising from the previous minutes, including:
 - Update from UHSC on the Dartbrook VPA. PS noted that Council had not made a decision on the expenditure of funds from the Dartbrook VPA as yet;
 - GM overview on the Spontaneous Combustion Trigger Action Response Plan (TARP) (see **Section 6**); and
 - DW update on the 2023 Annual Review (see **Section 6**).

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5. CORRESPONDENCE

- 5.1 LA noted that correspondence since the previous CCC meeting was included in the June 2024 meeting notice & agenda.
- 5.2 LA noted the request for two MSC Council delegates on the CCC. TF confirmed that the intention was for MSC to allocate additional representatives of CCCs once the new Councillors were confirmed in September. JB noted that he had no in-principle issues with the proposal. No objection from members. *[Note: The current Terms of Reference for the CCC include Cr Jennifer Lecky and Theresa Folpp as MSC delegates.]*

6. PROJECT / COMPANY UPDATE

- 6.1 JB provided an update on the Dartbrook restart schedule, noting:
- The current schedule has first coal being produced in mid-August 2024, with washing of coal planned around November;
 - The initial phase of operations would aim to crush approximately 20,000 tonnes of coal to 'prove' production;
 - TL questioned the number of miner units that would be used in operations. JB confirmed one miner was planned to come online for the August start, with a second miner scheduled to start in late September / early October. A third miner is scheduled to start operations in February 2025;
 - A bulk coal sample of approximately five tonnes would be taken in mid-late July before start of operations, to confirm coal specifications;
 - An Enterprise Agreement for site was required prior to the bulk sample being taken. The draft Agreement was with the Fair Work Commission for review and determination;
 - Dartbrook had now secured all other approvals, licencing and other authorities required to restart operations;
 - JB confirmed changes to approved reject management are not proposed and that there was plenty of capacity for storage in the Wynn Seam goaf; and
 - The first miner and related equipment is on site and ready to progress. The remaining works in the Hunter Tunnel required before restart of operations were scheduled for completion in the next month.
- 6.2 TF and TL questioned the coal specifications that would be targeted. JB and GM confirmed that thermal and PCI coal would ultimately be the target streams, however the product would also be dependent on the properties required to meet required specifications.
- 6.3 TF questioned the status of the sites mining leases. JB noted that all the required mining leases are in place with the first requiring renewal in 2033. It is currently proposed to extend this mining lease to 2043. ML 1497 expires in December 2043. TL asked whether mining authorities were based on resources. JB noted that JORC resource and reserve calculations were critical to the process, but mining authorities were usually extended by the regulator for a set 21-year period.
- 6.4 TL also asked about the target coal seams. JB confirmed that the Kayuga and Piercefield Seam were currently approved to be mined and that there were no current plans to mine the Wynn Seam.
- 6.5 JB noted that the mine's Environmental Protection Licence had also recently been updated to reflect the site moving out of care and maintenance into production. The EPA were particularly interested in ensuring that the mines effluent treatment system had the capacity for the growing workforce.

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- 6.6 On employment, JB confirmed all key statutory roles have been filled and the current site workforce is around 113 people, which is fine for the restart of operations. The workforce was planned to increase to approximately 160 people by end of 2024, with a maximum workforce of approximately 240 people envisaged. JB confirmed that the majority of the mine workforce lives within the MCS, UHSC and adjoining LGAs.
- 6.7 JB referred to the new website, which would include all public Dartbrook documents. [Management Plans - Dartbrook Mine](#)
- 6.8 TL asked for an update on water management in the Hunter Tunnel. JB noted that around 1.2 – 1.7 ML / week of water flowing into the tunnel was being managed by pumping into the Wynn Seam. Water from the Wynn Seam can be recycled for use in site operations by pumping to the surface and to the Evaporation Ponds.
- 6.9 GM presented an extract from the TARP in the Spontaneous Combustion Management Plan. The intent of the TARP is to define and drive actions that must be taken in response to certain gas levels. TF asked what is available to reduce gas and spontaneous combustion risk. GM confirmed that responses to triggers could include further investigations, treatment or extinguishment measures. JB noted that Dartbrook engaged a specialist to provide input to surface and underground controls and responses for spontaneous combustion.
- 6.10 JB noted the intention to apply for a modification to the mines development consent in the near future (MOD8). MOD8 would apply for a six-year extension of mining operations, to gain back the time lost as a consequence of the delay in approval of MOD7. AR questioned the timing of MOD8 and JB noted that the intention was to align it with the current renewal date of Coal Lease 386. JB will notify the CCC through LA if the government accept Dartbrook's application for MOD8.
- 6.11 TL raised the issue of fugitive greenhouse gas emissions discussed at the last meeting. JB acknowledged that fugitive GHG management is a challenge and referred to the Commonwealth Safeguard in place for sites that emit over 100,000 tonnes of CO₂-e per annum. JB noted that Dartbrook were looking at future options to drive down emission reductions, including investigations into the use of some electric rather than diesel mining equipment.
- TL suggested that Dartbrook should look at opportunities to invest in renewable energy generation on the mine site, which JB took on board. AR asked what the investment profile looked like in the next six years. JB noted the key thing for Dartbrook was to investigate and prove up technologies that could be put in place to reduce GHG emissions if the mine was to continue beyond 2033.
- 6.12 TL noted the concern over Scope 3 GHG emissions being reviewed as part of the Mount Pleasant court case and the need for end-use customers to reduce emissions. There would be a community expectation that Dartbrook show reductions in fugitive emissions and to work with its customers to reduce their emissions.
- 6.13 TF asked about the approvals path for MOD8 and whether it would be 'substantially the same' development. JBA noted the precedents in NSW for whether modifications are 'substantially the same' to the original development. There have been 8 - 10 similar applications in NSW for extensions of time to development consents as will be proposed for MOD8. JBA reiterated that MOD8 would not seek to change any other aspects of Dartbrook Mines planning approval and that the coal proposed to be mined out to 2033 would be coal that is currently approved to be mined.
- 6.14 DW provided an update on Dartbrook stakeholder consultation and environmental monitoring results since the last CCC meeting.
- All compliance monitoring data were within approved criteria, and surface water monitoring trends upstream and downstream of the site were well-aligned.

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- 6.15 AR confirmed that, although resolved, the workshop lighting issue reported on 30 May 2024 should be recorded as a community complaint. DW will update the CCC presentation and community complaints register.
- 6.16 DW confirmed that no environmental incidents had occurred since the previous meeting.
- 6.17 DW noted that the 2023 Annual Review had been lodged with DPHI at the end of March. One non-compliance had been recorded due to the outage of the 'Hulbert' HVAS air quality monitor. DPHI confirmed that the Annual Review generally met their guideline requirements on 24 May and requested that the following information is provided in future documents:
- A summary of all Water TARP investigations; and
 - A plan showing the status of mining and rehabilitation activities at the end of each calendar year.

7. COMMUNITY QUESTIONS

- 7.1 Responses to community questions from the previous meeting are addressed in **Section 6**.
- 7.2 TL asked who was responsible for management of the land around the Evaporation Ponds, noting the boxthorn present in that area. JB will let the land manager know that this needs to be treated.
- 7.3 TF asked about the apparent duplication in rehabilitation reporting requirements between the DPHI and Resources Regulator. DW confirmed that there was some duplication of content between these documents and the reports would continue to be published on the new Dartbrook website.
- 7.4 AR questioned whether there would be any improvements to site security to prevent public access. JB confirmed Dartbrook were looking at installing boom gates at the access points to site at the CHPP and West Site workshop.

8. GENERAL BUSINESS

- 8.1 JB raised the possibility of the CCC doing a surface walk-around for an hour after the formal part of the next meeting, to look at the remote miner setup and the CHPP. JB would confirm arrangements before the next meeting. Dartbrook will supply the required visitor PPE.
- 8.2 LA confirmed there was no other general business.

9. MEETING CLOSE

- 9.1 LA closed the meeting and noted the next CCC would be held on 18 September 2024, starting at 9am.
- 9.2 LA closed the meeting at 10:07.

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Action Items

ITEM	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
1.	Following result of MSC LGA elections in September and advice from the General Manager on representation on this CCC - Update the CCC's Terms of Reference.	LA
2.	Update the CCC presentation slides and community complaints register to reflect the lighting complaint of 30 May 2024	DW
3.	Report on any GHG emissions reduction measures being considered.	JB
4.	Let the land manager know that boxthorn around the Evaporation Ponds needs to be treated.	JB
5.	Report back on additional site access security measures to be put in place.	JB
6.	Confirm arrangements for the surface walk-around after the next CCC meeting.	JB