

**DARTBROOK COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES – 12 March 2025**

<b>ATTENDEES:</b>		
Lisa Andrews	LA	Independent Chairperson
Annette Rahn	AR	Community Representative
Tony Lonergan	TL	Community Representative
Arthur Mitchell	AM	Community Representative
De-Anne Douglas	DD	Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council
Adam Williamson	AW	Upper Hunter Shire Council (UHSC) Councillor
Earle Shields	ES	Upper Hunter Shire Council (UHSC) Councillor
Rod Scholes	RS	Muswellbrook Shire Council (MSC) Councillor
Theresa Folpp	TF	MSC Representative
Jeff Beatty	JB	Dartbrook Operations Head of Operational Services
John McNee	JM	Dartbrook Operations HSECT Advisory
James Bailey	JBA	Xenith Consulting
Dorian Walsh	DW	Xenith Consulting
<b>APOLOGIES:</b>		
Paul Smith	PS	UHSC Representative
Clare Bailey	CB	MSC Councillor (alternate MSC Councillor representative)
Ian Crawford	IC	Dartbrook Operations HSECT Manager

### **1. INTRODUCTION & APOLOGIES:**

- 1.1 The meeting was opened by LA at 09:05.
- 1.2 The above apologies were noted and introductions were made by all attendees.

### **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 the previous minutes were sent out on 6 December 2024. No issues on the draft minutes were raised.

### **4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

- 4.1 LA gave an update on actions arising since the previous minutes, including:
  - Appointment of RS and CB as MSC Councillor representatives on the CCC;
  - Approach to the Aberdeen Community Advisory Committee (ACAC) by LA on 18 December 2024, regarding whether the group would like to have direct representation on the CCC. LA and ES will follow up with ACAC over a response;

**DARTBROOK COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES – 12 March 2025**

- The need to notify LA and the CCC regarding the public exhibition of DA 231-07-2000 Modification 8 (MOD8). JB will notify LA once the application is put on exhibition by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) and send a link to the government website;
- Sending ES a copy of all previous Dartbrook community newsletters. ES confirmed he has received them; and
- LA and AW gave an update on the issue raised at the last CCC Meeting in relation to the amount of mine traffic and speeding incidences on Blairemore Lane. They noted that the district traffic police had been notified. AW also noted that the matter had been raised with the UHSC Services Officers and passed on to the operators of Mangoola, Mt Pleasant and Bengalla Mines so their workforces could be informed over the concerns raised. JBA noted that a condition of DA 231-07-2000 requires all personnel not living locally must drive to site via Dartbrook's private Mine Access Road from the New England Highway. JB noted that his workforce had been informed over the matter.

## **5. CORRESPONDENCE**

- 5.1 LA noted that correspondence since the previous CCC meeting was included in the March 2024 meeting agenda and subsequent reminder emails.

## **6. PROJECT / COMPANY UPDATE**

- 6.1 JB gave an update on Dartbrook activities since the previous meeting, including:
- The use of three miner units, with one operated dayshift only and the other two operating 24/7. The third miner had come into operations in late January 2025 and the final [fourth] miner was scheduled to be commissioned in June / July;
  - 174 people are currently employed on site, with a further 30 roles needing to be filled to have the 'full complement' of the site workforce;
  - The milestone of the first train since restart being sent out to Vales Point Power Station on 18 December 2024. Three other trains have been despatched from site since that date;
  - Approximately 97 kt of coal is stockpiled at the East Site;
  - Progression of refurbishment work to allow the recommissioning and washing of coal at the CHPP. Washing of coal will also require the emplacement of reject material at the East Site Reject Emplacement Area; and
  - Key Dartbrook safety statistics.
- 6.2 AM asked what the typical coal quality is and JB confirmed in was approximately 5.6 kcal as an unwashed thermal coal product. A higher specification coal suitable for export at approximately 6 kcal will be targeted once the CHPP restarts.
- 6.3 JB outlined the noise monitoring and mitigation work program that had commenced for the CHPP. This program would need to be completed prior to the commencement of coal washing at the CHPP.
- 6.4 JB referred to the nomination of a graduate Dartbrook Engineer as a finalist in the NSW Minerals Council Exceptional Young Women in Mining awards.
- 6.5 JB noted that Dartbrook Mines Rescue team has also completed additional training since the last meeting, with eight people fully trained. In responding to a question from TF, JM noted that approximately 5% of the underground workforce should be trained in mines rescue methods;

**DARTBROOK COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES – 12 March 2025**

- 6.6 JB also referred to ongoing discussions between Dartbrook and Energy Co. regarding the proposal for wind farm developers to use the Mine Access Road to transfer turbine components around Muswellbrook township. JB reiterated that Energy Co. are co-ordinating the process on behalf of a number of wind farm developers and that Dartbrook have concerns regarding the potential for impacts to the Mine Access Road and bridge infrastructure. Broader issues associated with the Energy Co. proposal were also discussed by DD, RS and TL;
- 6.7 JB confirmed that Dartbrook MOD8 environmental assessment report has been completed and the application has been lodged with the NSW Government for assessment. Public notices in local newspapers have also been made. JB is expecting that the Modification Report will be placed on public exhibition by DPHI in the near future and will notify LA once this is done. JBA summarised the scope of MOD8, noting that a six-year extension to the life of mine is proposed. No other changes to approved mining operations or extent are proposed as part of the Modification.
- 6.8 ES questioned how water will be sourced for the CHPP once it restarts. JB gave an overview of the site water management system, including the ability for Dartbrook to store approximately 4 GL in the Wynn Seam goaf and up to 450 ML in mine water dams for use at the CHPP. JBA also referred to the consistent flow of water from the hard rock aquifer to the Hunter Tunnel. On the issue of coal processing, JB confirmed that the intention was to recycle as much water as possible. Coarser reject is approved to be emplaced on land at the REA and finer reject would be pumped as a slurry in a pipeline to the underground workings via the Eastern drift.
- 6.9 RS asked how the CHPP washery was set up and JB provided a commentary on the CHPP process.
- 6.10 TF asked what production level was currently in the plan and JB responded that steady state of 2.4 Mtpa was the current target. JB noted that there was potential to increase this in the future, within the overall DA approval limits.
- 6.11 The difficulties in attracting and retaining underground personnel was discussed by the group, including:
- Potential flexibility in or changes to the site rosters;
  - Risks and opportunities in bringing in and training 'clean skin' workers and apprentices;
  - The ability for Dartbrook to source experienced underground workers from other sites or regions such as Wollongong;
  - Response to Dartbrook job advertisements to date. As an example, JB noted that out of 40 employment acceptance notices recently sent out by Dartbrook to applicants, 27 had been accepted.
- 6.12 DW provided an update on Dartbrook stakeholder consultation and environmental monitoring results since the last CCC meeting. No environmental incidents had occurred and no complaints had been received.
- All compliance monitoring data was within approved criteria and surface water monitoring trends upstream and downstream of the site were closely aligned. DW stated that the 'Hulbert' HVAS monitoring location is not yet back in operation and that the powerline supplying the Macairstrip monitor was also damaged in the January 2025 storm event. Dartbrook depositional dust gauges in proximity to the Hulbert and Macairstrip HVAS sites will be used to provide representative air quality data until the monitors are recommissioned.
- 6.13 JB noted that the next thing that Dartbrook would have to watch closely would be any issues associated with the restart of the CHPP.
- 6.14 DW also stated that the 2024 Annual Review of site operations would be submitted to DPHI at the end of March. DW will publish the Annual Review document on the Dartbrook website and send a copy to LA once it is finalised.

**DARTBROOK COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES – 12 March 2025**

## **7. COMMUNITY QUESTIONS**

- 7.1 TL asked what the methane content in mine ventilation gas was. JB will confirm this for TL.
- 7.2 TL also referred to recent studies that are indicating that fugitive emission assumptions are underestimating coal mining impacts and that assessment methods were being reviewed. JB agreed that greenhouse gas management is a big issue and that it is in Dartbrook's interests to implement controls to minimise greenhouse gas emissions due to the Commonwealth Clean Energy Regulator's Safeguard Mechanism framework.
- 7.3 RS asked about sulphur content in the Piercefield Seam and referred to issues experience at other operations in the area. JB said that the Wynn Seam had historically been more of an issue at Dartbrook, rather than the Piercefield.
- 7.4 TF asked for an update on Dartbrook coal quality analysis and whether coking coal specifications had been met. JB noted that more studies were needed on this, to supplement the initial testing that had been discussed in previous CCC meetings. JB also indicated coal quality on site generally improved further towards the west.
- 7.5 LA noted that no community questions were raised prior to the meeting.

## **8. GENERAL BUSINESS**

- 8.1 DD gave an update on WLALC activities, including:
  - Upgrades to the WLALC offices and Keeping Place;
  - Two-day cultural workshops that have been set up. DD mentioned that the concept would be to have representatives from industry and mining attend, with invites planned to go out in April. AGLM are on board to support the program;
  - Pantry and Second Bite community programs and opportunities;
  - Status of the Muswellbrook Common. DD is encouraging non-Aboriginal people to contact her over access to the Common area; and
  - Plans for development of a WLALC Cultural Centre; and
  - Overview of WLALC funding arrangements.
- 8.2 AW noted that ACAC have recently received Upper Hunter Shire VPA funding. Part of this funding was used to refurbish the Aberdeen Tigers scoreboard.
- 8.3 NS confirmed that the ACAC are holding formal meetings on a quarterly basis, with informal discussions held between these meetings.
- 8.4 DD noted the programs run through the Blackrock charity since the previous meeting, supporting 469 families during the Christmas period with a Toy Run and Christmas lunch. Around 2,500 people are supported by Blackrock.
- 8.5 LA confirmed there was no other general business.

## **9. MEETING CLOSE**

- 9.1 LA referred to the next meeting scheduled for 11 June 2025, starting at 9am.
- 9.2 LA closed the meeting at 10:11 am and thanked all representatives for their attendance and input.

**DARTBROOK COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES – 12 March 2025**

**Action Items**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>
1.	Notify LA when the DA 231-07-2000 MOD8 Modification Report is put on public exhibition by DPHI	JBA
2.	Confirm general methane content of Dartbrook ventilation gas for TL	JBA
3.	Send LA a copy of the final Dartbrook 2024 Annual Review document	DW