

Chain Valley/Manning Community Consultative Committee Annual Report for 2021

Details

CCC / Project Name:	Chain Valley Colliery and Manning Colliery	Reporting Period:	January to December 2021
Independent Chairperson:	Margaret MacDonald-Hill	Proponent Contact:	Lachlan McWha

1. Executive Summary

The Chain Valley/Manning Community Consultative Committee (CCC) was previously two separate community consultative committees with adjacent underground operations under the same operator. Mining in the area has been carried out since the 1960s and both committees were established as a requirement of consent conditions for the continuation of mining approval for Chain Valley Colliery in January 2012 and Manning Colliery in March 2008. The committees were combined with Departmental approval in July 2016 and this arrangement remains in force while mining operations stay within the control of the one operator. Ownership of the mines' assets to Great Southern Energy trading as Delta Coal was finalised in April 2019.

The Chain Valley and Manning Collieries are located on the Central Coast of NSW, approximately sixty kilometres south of Newcastle and bounded generally to the west by the M1 Motorway and the Pacific Highway to the east, abutting the shores of Lake Macquarie. Site infrastructure is within the Central Coast Council Local Government area, whilst current underground mining operations are under the lake in the Lake Macquarie City Council Local Government area. The collieries supply coal to the Vales Point Power Station.

The committee operates in accordance with the Department of Planning and Environment's 2019 Community Consultative Committee Guidelines for State Significant Projects and comprises:

- seven local community representatives;
- an elected representative from Lake Macquarie City Council;
- a representative from Central Coast Council;
- two company representatives, with attendance from other personnel as required;
- one independent Chairperson.

With another year of impacts from Covid-19, attendance numbers remained consistently high. The telecommunications challenges that caused some issues in the previous year seem to have been overcome this reporting year. Only the August meeting was held by video conference, with the February, May and November meetings conducted as regular face to face meetings in compliance with all Covid Health and Safety regulations.

Representatives from Subsidence Advisory NSW attended the February meeting and advised the Committee on the role of the organisation; regulatory changes; the number of Local Government areas with declared mine subsidence districts; the process of claiming compensation for mine subsidence damage; emergency response and development regulations. As the legacy issue of mine subsidence several decades ago

is ever present within the community, the presentation by the Subsidence Advisory was most welcome.

Delta Coal also developed a fact sheet on mine subsidence and sought input from the community representatives. This was part of updates and information placed on the company website, together with exploration facts as mining activities move west.

Consultants from Umwelt undertaking the Environmental and Social Impact Assessments for the proposed Consent Consolidation Project continued with their survey work within the community.

The committee maintains a strong interest in the grant funding provided by Delta Coal's Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) with Central Coast Council, established in 2017. As reported in previous years, the Chain Valley consent dictates the establishment of a community trust to improve public infrastructure and community projects for the areas of Summerland Point, Gwandalan, Chain Valley Bay and Mannering Park. Some of the CCC members are also members of the Community Advisory Panel (CAP) and the community projects awarded under the agreement remain a regular agenda item.

The members are well informed and have many diverse interests, accordingly discussion at meetings covers a vast array of topics including the new air quality monitor on the other side of the lake at Mirrabooka, the use and reduction of potable water on site, the depth of cover in the proposed eastern mining area, the road maintenance agreement between Delta Coal and Central Coast Council and problem Radiata Pine trees at Mannering Colliery.

Community representation on the committee has not changed in a very long time. All the community members of the CCC are well respected and very active within their local neighbourhoods. A change in Delta Coal representation on the committee occurred this year following a corporate management restructure. The company's commitment to the committee and support of the broader community has not changed. It still maintains in kind support, charitable donations and staff time. The presence of the Chief Executive Officer and Technical Services Manager at meetings contributes to a high level communication with their knowledge and industry experience, coupled with that of the Environmental Compliance Coordinator, it is a good dynamic with productive meetings. The committee enjoys a good rapport amongst all members and is appreciative of comprehensive presentations and information exchange at each meeting.

- For the reporting period, other matters discussed at the meetings included, but not limited to:
- general environmental management and monitoring, including air quality, noise, seagrass and aquatic flora, subsidence, foreshore monitoring program and bathymetric survey
- Land management, including weed management within colliery holdings and lake foreshore
- Environmental improvement programs including pollution reduction with improvements and implementation of a Sewage Management System and projected sewer connection in 2022 and site improvements to improve noise mitigation
- environmental operational updates, approvals, exceedances and incident reports

- progress of Environmental Impact Statement studies for modifications to Chain Valley and Mannering Consents as a consolidation/continuity project
- long term mine plans and partial transfer of mining lease from Myuna
- Community Newsletters and Information Session, Stakeholder Evaluation Survey and development of frequently asked questions information sheets for website
- complaints
- Annual Reviews
- Catherine Hill Bay remediation
- updates to website
- community projects
- Covid-19 site procedure

2. CCC activities over last 12 months

- Committee meetings were held in the months of February, May, August and November 2021 with a site tour of the sedimentation ponds undertaken at the May meeting. The August meeting was conducted remotely via MS Teams.
- Additional consultation activities on VPA process and grant allocations were carried out by Central Coast Council at the suggestion of the committee. There was a concern with Central Coast being in administration, that it would cause a disruption to the grants. However, this proved to be unfounded.

3. Key issues

The key issues for the Committee were improvements to the timing and advertisement of the VPA grants funding to the broader community, increasing information to the community on Delta Coal's operations and future plans and seeking overall improvement to the sites.

Improvements to site infrastructure are ongoing. Much focus has been on improvements to resolve noise complaints from a resident at Macquarie Shores Village emanating from the Mannering Colliery. Delta Coal management have liaised with the resident and others at the Village to identify the source and potential resolution. This has seen a considerable descending trend in the complaint numbers from mid year to the end of 2021. All other complaints for both collieries remain minimal. There have been no specific concerns raised by members regarding the mines' performance and compliance with regulatory authorities.

The committee maintains its interest in the progress of the miniwall method of extraction and the mine layout, any environmental impacts from subsidence and the monitoring results. Impacts to foreshore, water quality and lake environment remain topical at meetings.

It is anticipated that the meeting schedule and reporting structure to the committee will remain similar to previous years, in accordance with the consent conditions of approval and departmental guidelines. The committee sets the ensuing year's meeting schedule in November each year to avoid any known conflicts.

Issue	Actions Taken	Next Steps
VPA, CAP and Community Trust	Central Coast Council implemented suggested changes by the CCC with improvements to advertising grant applications and allocations.	Maintain ongoing interest and offer suggestions where appropriate.
Broader community engagement	Delta Coal has updated its website to provide Fact Sheets and additional information to the broader community.	Ongoing as required.
Reduce potential noise complaints	CVC Fan upgraded and further noise mitigation undertaken Decommissioning and bypass of rotary breaker and enclosure of the coal handling preparation plant at Mannering Colliery	Review with further improvements to the coal handling and preparation plant
Committee request for information on rehabilitation costs and security deposits held by NSW Government	Information provided to committee at August meeting	Rehabilitation plans included as agenda item as appropriate
Committee request for more information on results of Benthic seasonal surveys in Lake Macquarie	Survey results presented to November meeting	Details of benthic species identified to be presented to February 2022 meeting.

4. Focus for next 12 months


The planned activities for 2022 will be guided by the contributions of all the committee members.

Topics may include:

- Water quality in Lake Macquarie
- Subsidence monitoring

To the best of my knowledge, there are no outstanding or emerging issues that have not been addressed or are in the process of being so, to the committee's satisfaction.

Committee Meeting minutes and presentations are available on the website within two weeks of each meeting.

Signature of Chair:	
Date:	March 1 2022.