

**MINUTES OF THE MT OWEN COMPLEX  
COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Tuesday 31st May 2005 at Mt Owen Mine**

Meeting opened by Mary Robinson at 10.05am.

**Present:**

Community: Patricia Bestic, Alec Schmierer, Wendy Williams, Deidre Olofsson, Leanne Cramp, Alan Noble, Gillian Holmes,  
Singleton Council: Mary Robinson (Chairperson), Brian Thomas, Val Scott  
Mt Owen Mine: Geoff Marschke, Nigel Charnock, Derek Walls, Gerry Jordaan,  
Other: Gail Collins (Mine Watch), Julie McMillan (HLA-Envirosciences)

**1. Apologies**

Apologies for the meeting were received from Julie Clydesdale, who has resigned from the committee and from Jenny Marshall. Julie is unable to attend meetings since they have been shifted to Tuesdays.

Nigel Charnock will contact Julie on behalf of the CCC to thank her for her valuable contribution to the Committee.

**2. Introduction of New Members**

Nigel introduced Gerry Jordaan to the Committee. Gerry replaces Peter Kane as the Operations Manager for Thiess at Mt Owen Mine. Mary welcomed Gerry to the Committee.

The number of committee members was discussed in light of Julie Clydesdale's resignation. It was agreed that Brian Thomas and Nigel Charnock would review previous correspondence between HVCC and Singleton Council and CCC minutes to determine if Council would advertise for a replacement community member.

**3. Declaration of Pecuniary Interests**

Mary Robinson asked Committee members to declare any pecuniary interests. There were no such declarations from the Committee.

**4. Previous Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2005 were accepted as a true record of that meeting. Moved Alec Schmierer, seconded Alan Noble. Carried.

## **5. Business Arising from the Previous Minutes**

### **5.1 *Relocating Giveaway Sign on Bowmans Creek Bridge***

Brian Thomas reported that the new 60km speed restriction at the bridge is deemed to provide enough safety when crossing from the west to east side and will enable the give way signs to be relocated to the eastern approach of the bridge. Widening the approach will not be required if the sign proves to be successful in slowing traffic.

The 80km speed signs erected on Hebden Road were discussed and have general approval of the Committee.

### **5.2 *Draft Blast Management Plan***

Nigel asked that this be moved to later in the meeting.

### **5.3 *Blast Hotline***

Leanne stated that she does not always receive timely notification of blasts or changes to blast times and has therefore been ringing the hotline. She has found that the hotline hasn't stated the date of the daily blast but it was correct yesterday.

Geoff Marschke will follow up on Leanne's complaint and suggestion that someone from the Mt Owen Complex regularly check that the message is correct before making it available to the public.

## **6. Feedback on Mt Owen Mine Community Information Session**

Nigel gave a brief overview of the community meeting held at Mt Olive Hall on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2005, which included presentations on:

- Development Consent conditions for Mt Owen
- Noise Monitoring Program
- Air Quality Monitoring Program
- Blast Monitoring Program
- Function and role of the Mt Owen Complex CCC
- Audits and inspections required under the new Consent; and
- Public Access to information.

Nigel advised the Committee that he had received feedback from a number of people in attendance following the meeting. Nigel provided a presentation on this feedback and details of how Mt Owen will incorporate this feedback into future meetings and general consultation with the community. The presentation also provided details of current and proposed community initiatives, which are consistent with Mt Owen's objective of continually improving performance in this regard.

Patricia Bestic told the Committee that she thought the community meeting went well but feels some members of the community wanted their personal issues discussed at what should be a general meeting. She continued to say that Nigel did very well keeping the meeting to a general forum and not allowing it to become personal. Alec suggested that it be made clearer at general meetings/information sessions that personal issues such as property acquisition are not appropriate.

Nigel agreed with Patricia and Alec, but stated that residents are entitled to discuss some personal issues such as dust and noise at these meetings as they are of potential interest to the wider community.

Patricia asked if there were plans to have another open day at Mt Owen, similar to the one held in November 2003, including making monitoring consultants available on the day. Nigel stated that there were no plans for such an event at the moment as these events take considerable organization and resources. However, Nigel reinforced that Mt Owen maintain an open-door policy and tours could be arranged for interested persons or parties. Geoff suggested a demonstration of dust and noise monitoring equipment could be set up in the car park area at Mt Owen if there was sufficient interest from the Committee.

Deidre asked if future meetings will be held at Mt Olive Hall citing the safety aspect of the road access from her residence to the Hall. Nigel explained that this was a convenient location for the majority of residents with an interest in the Mt Owen Operations. There was general consensus from the Committee that the location was appropriate.

Leanne asked if the information gained was via the feedback forms sent out with the meeting invitation. Nigel stated that the feedback forms that she was referring to related to the recent DA consultation process, not the community meeting and that this information would be summarized in the next newsletter. The feedback responses listed above were from residents who spoke to him after the Mt Olive meeting.

Val asked how many residents responded to the invitation to the Information Session. Nigel stated that approx. 150 letters were mailed using an extensive stakeholder list (it was not a mailbox drop) and approx. 30 persons attended. Gillian questioned if the residents living inside the mine impact zone in mine owned residences were included in the mail out. Nigel stated that they were included and that they are eligible to access to the same information as other residents regarding the Mt Owen operations but they do not have the same rights as private residents under the Consent as they are renting mine owned properties that are predicted to be impacted by noise and/or dust above acceptable criteria. Nigel advised that this is communicated to potential tenants and is covered in the in rent/lease arrangements.

There was general discussion regarding the best means of advising the community of who the community members on the Mt Owen Operations CCC are. Suggestions included a listing of CCC representatives and contact details on the back page of the newsletter, the Singleton Council website (noted by Brian), Mt Owen Website or in the Council Notices in the local newspaper. Other comments from Leanne included her disappointment that the CCC members were not introduced at the community meeting. It was decided that this topic be included on the agenda of the next meeting.

## **7. Review of Blast Management Plan**

Nigel explained that the Blast Management Plan covers both Mt Owen and Ravensworth East Mines. Nigel advised that HVCC, who now manage the Mt Owen Mine, have applied to DIPNR to modify the Ravensworth East Development Consent and bring it in line with the recently granted Mt Owen Consent. This will enable HVCC to streamline & consolidate the environmental management processes for the Mt Owen and Ravensworth East mines. The proposed modifications will not result in any additional environmental impacts and are consistent with the wording of the new Mt Owen

Development Consent (DA 14-1-2004). The modification will allow for the development and implementation of common:

- Environmental Management System (EMS);
- Environmental Management Plans and Strategies;
- Environmental Monitoring Network;
- Environmental Monitoring Programs;
- Annual Environmental Management Report;
- Independent Environmental Audit Program;
- Community Consultative Committee (CCC);
- Systems for Public Access to Information;
- Water & Tailings Management System; and
- Waste Management System.

Nigel and Geoff worked through each section of draft version of the Blast Management Plan with the CCC and addressed the wording and any concerns of the committee as they were raised.

Deidre asked if risk assessments noted in the Plan would include those private landholders who will be potentially affected by blasting at Mt Owen in the future. Nigel acknowledged this point and explained that it will be between approximately 10 to 15 years before there will be a need to blast within 500m of any private property.

Gillian queried notification of any blasting exceedances and asked if they can be reported to the CCC. Nigel explained that the mine is required to notify the EPA of any exceedances and after they have been notified and have responded to Mt Owen, a summary of the incident and outcome of any investigation can be made available to the CCC. It was agreed that details of any reportable incidents would be provided at CCC meetings, as the Mine has done in the past.

Deidre feels that details of and responses to complaints should be put in writing to residents if requested. Nigel explained that responses are currently provided verbally in a timely manner and that written responses to every complaint would place an excessive burden on the Mine and duplicates this process. Nigel also noted that details of complaints are made available to the public through the Annual Environmental Management Report and that the Mine maintains a detailed electronic complaints database should future reference to any specific complaint need to be made.

Leanne asked about the time frame to have the Blasting Trial program in place, which will allow Mt Owen to blast as early as 7am up to 12 times a year to take advantage of calmer early morning conditions. Geoff stated that the recent heavy workload had prevented progress on the program, but the Mine was hoping to start work on the program in June. Leanne requested that the CCC be taken through the draft program before it is submitted to Government Departments for approval. Nigel agreed that this was a reasonable request and confirmed that the CCC would be provided with the opportunity to comment on the trial program in the same manner as this Blast Management Plan.

Leanne queried the section on meteorological assessment prior to blasting, specifically reference to the depth of the blast in pit as a consideration in the blasting protocol as her previous experiences with the depth has been an issue from previous complaints. Geoff explained that the deeper the blast is in the pit, the less potential for dust to be carried significant distance across neighbouring private residences because of the shielding effect of the highwall. Nigel added that this had been

demonstrated through observations of blasts and complaint records. Nigel asked the Committee to bear in mind that the blasting protocol is not set in stone and will be subject to continual refinement based on changes in mining operations and feedback from residents

Brian Thomas noted that the current detail on meteorological assessment prior to blasting is not adequate and requires further explanation. Brian also referred to the section on structural inspections and noted that private residents outside the 3km zone referred to in the Mt Owen Consent should have the right to request a structural inspection if they believe that blasting at Mt Owen is causing damage to their property. Nigel explained that this was certainly the case, however for these residents the first response is typically to for the Mine to undertake monitoring for an agreed period to determine vibration and overpressure levels experienced at the residence before a structural inspection is warranted. It was agreed that both sections of the Plan would be updated as per Brian's request to provide further details.

Gillian questioned whether the blasting vibration and overpressure limits for the Ravensworth Homestead were restrictive enough. Nigel noted that the safe blasting limits were derived by an independent blasting engineer following a detailed study of the building and completion of structural support works. Gillian asked what the Mine was doing to manage the Homestead to prevent further degradation. Nigel and Derek explained that the homestead is structurally poor due to age and termite infestation and not currently suitable for tenants. The house is secured to prevent vandalism.

Geoff explained that the original draft and any subsequent amended versions of the Blast Management Plan are kept on file and that once finalized the plan will be available on the website.

Leanne expressed her concern that both the Mt Owen and Ravensworth East Consent (if modification is approved) will permit up to two blasts a day (total of four). Nigel noted that the current Ravensworth East Consent does not apply a limit on the total number of blasts that can be fired per day. As such, the mine is willing to accept more stringent restrictions by downgrading the blasting frequency at Ravensworth East from 'no restrictions' to a maximum of two blasts per day, bringing it in line with the restrictions at Mt Owen.

Nigel advised that following today's meeting, the agreed changes to the Blast Management Plan would be made and the draft submitted to DIPNR for approval by 8 June 2005. A copy of the final Plan will be provided to the CCC.

## **8. Update on the implementation of key Consent Conditions**

Nigel advised the Committee that draft copies of Environmental Management Plans and monitoring programs required under the new Mt Owen Development Consent will be submitted to DIPNR by 8 June 2005 and that HVCC would be looking to work closely with DIPNR to finalise and implement these as soon as practicable.

Nigel provided the Committee with a brief look at the Mt Owen website, which is substantially completed. Nigel advised that the website should be available to the public within the next two weeks and that the website details would be provided in the next Community Newsletter due out in June.

## **9. Review of Operational Performance**

Derek Walls gave an update on the operational performance of the Mt Owen Complex since the last meeting, including:

- Operations at Mt Owen hampered by geological structures, including instability of low wall - remedial works (buttressing and recovery plan) and ongoing monitoring of low wall in place;
- New noise attenuated fleet operational, including excavator and fleet of trucks – Derek explained extensive sound suppression on this equipment and encouraged the CCC to take a tour of the Mine to inspect this equipment in operation;
- Noise bund being constructed on the eastern side of the new West Dump to minimise impacts on neighbouring residents;
- Aerial showing West Pit and progress of mining operations; and
- Glendell project area – brief update on the development, including further refinement of the mine plan being undertaken

Brian asked about the likely start date of mining at Glendell. Derek advised that full scale mining is unlikely to occur within a two year timeframe due to infrastructure constraints. It is planned to process coal from Glendell through the Mt Owen CHPP, which does not have the capacity until the approved upgrade of this facility is completed

Gerrie Jordaan who is the new Operations Manager for Thiess at Mt Owen Mine (replacing Peter Kane) was introduced and gave a brief summary of his 30 years in the mining industry, including seven years experience in Australia. Gerrie outlined his commitment to ensuring that mining operations are conducted efficiently, safely, in an environmentally responsible manner and in consideration of the community.

Geoff Marschke gave an update on the operational performance of the Mt Owen Complex since the last meeting, including:

- Mining of Tailings Pit 2 adjacent to the Mt Owen Rail Loop completed;
- Mining in block B6 at Mt Owen has commenced;
- West dump at Mt Owen commenced;
- Clearing of next mining block at Mt Owen(C1) has commenced;
- Dust Deposition results
- Particulate Matter/TSP 2004/2005 averages and results
- Particulate Matter/PM10 2004/2005 averages and results
- Glennies Creek Road PM10 to be moved away from adjacent Ashton Mine and closer to private residencies potentially impacted by Mt Owen;
- Update on the continuous noise monitoring system being implemented and the difficulties of filtering non-mining noise sources from the noise trace;
- Complaints History;
- Environmental Protection Licenses have been officially transferred from HVCC over to Theiss;
- Approval to reduce Southern Remnant of Ravensworth State Forest to 10ha received from DIPNR in April 2005;
- Wild dog baiting being undertaken (co-ordinated with Regional aerial baiting program);
- On-going weed control

Leanne asked for clarification of the number of electric verses mechanical trucks in operations at the Mine. Derek Walls confirmed that there are currently 21 mechanical drive trucks and 12 electric drive rear dump trucks. Leanne made comments about the Mine ensuring that machinery are in the correct operating position depending on the time of day as required under the new Mt Owen Consent. Leanne was referring to the requirement for the Mine to ensure that only attenuated equipment are operating on the West Dump and behind the noise bund at night. . Gerrie explained that Theiss will operate noise attenuated equipment in the correct position (elevations) at night in order to minimise noise impacts.

## **11. General Business**

Gail Collins from Mine Watch discussed the merits of a CCC newsletter, which are being distributed by CCC's of some other mines such as Bengalla and tabled examples of CCC Newsletters. . She suggested that key issues for the newsletter could be decided at the CCC meetings to raise awareness of the local community. Nigel agreed that a newsletter could serve to provide a valuable link between the CCC and the local community. Gail advised that the Committee responsible for developing and distributing the new newsletter could be a balance of mine and CCC committee members.

Gail stated that DIPNR are running a workshop in June to discuss proposed guidelines for CCC committees to ensure consistency due to poor performance and commitment from some mines. Mary explained that Singleton Shire already has guidelines in place and the committee's that she is responsible for work well. Gail said that the Mt Owen committee appears to operate effectively and should be congratulated.

Nigel agreed that a separate newsletter has merit but could result in duplication of the information provided in the mine's existing Newsletter as it is quite detailed. Nigel also questioned the time, commitment and resources required for a regular publication. He suggested that the existing Mt Owen Newsletter could be expanded to include a more detailed section on CCC meetings, should the Committee agree. Nigel asked CCC members to give it further thought prior to discussion at the next meeting. Brian suggested a summary of key issues and the outcomes be added to the existing newsletter.

## **12. Next Meeting**

The next meeting has been tentatively scheduled for 10.00am **Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2005** at Mt Owen Mine.

Meeting closed 1.25pm

Minutes prepared by Julie McMillan (HLA Envirosciences)

*Action Items next page*

**Action Items:**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Raised at CCC meeting on:</b>	<b>Status</b>
Report back to CCC on progress of relocating signs on Bowmans Creek Bridge.	Council	26/11/04	Completed
Provide presentation on Mt Owen Complex Biodiversity and Land management Plan, which was delayed at meeting on 26/11/04,	HVCC	26/11/04	
Provide Draft copy Blast Management Plan to CCC members for review at next meeting.	HVCC	04/03/05	Completed
Discuss Draft Blast Management Plan for Mt Owen at next CCC meeting	All CCC members	04/03/05	Completed
Review current Blasting Notification Protocol to determine if there is further scope to notify residents upon changes to the weekly blasting schedule	Theiss	04/03/05	Discussed at 31/05/05 meeting and decided Geoff to implement system for Theiss to call the Blast Hotline to check the information is correct.
Availing wider community of a list of CCC members	All CCC members	31/05/05	Agenda for next meeting
Discussion of Complaints Management Protocol –	All CCC members	31/05/05	Agenda for next meeting
CCC newsletter	All CCC members	31/05/05	Agenda for next meeting
Review of Draft Blasting Trial Program	All CCC members	31/05/05	Following preparation of draft Program