

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Stratford Coal Community Consultative Committee Meeting**  
Stratford Mine Site  
Thursday 10th August 2023

**Attendees:**

|                            |                        |                     |                  |
|----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Ms Margaret MacDonald-Hill | CCC Chairperson        | Richard Clark       | CCC Member       |
| Thomas Kirkwood            | Stratford Coal Pty Ltd | Kevin Lowrey        | CCC Member       |
| Michael Plain              | Stratford Coal Pty Ltd | Norm Bignell        | CCC Member       |
| John Cullen                | Stratford Coal Pty Ltd | Cr Katheryn Stinson | MidCoast Council |
| Lauren Whitelaw            | Stratford Coal Pty Ltd | Ryan Fenning        | MidCoast Council |

**Invited Guests:**

Nil

**1. Site Tour**

Nil.

**2. Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair opened the meeting at 9:02am.

Apologies: Mr Philip Greenwood and Mr Anthony Berecny.

**3. Declaration of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

Ms MacDonald-Hill declared that she is the Independent Chair, approved by the Secretary of the Department of Planning & Environment.

The declarations of the Stratford CCC members remain current.

**4. Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup> May 2023 were confirmed.

Moved: Norm Bignell; Seconded: Kevin Lowrey.

**5. Business Arising from Previous Meeting**

**Annual Action Item:** *MidCoast Council to provide an annual financial report each November on the spending of the Stratford Coal community enhancement contributions made to Council.*

Due November 2023 meeting.

Mr Plain requested that Council provides the financial report due in the November CCC meeting prior to the proposed CCC meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> November so that discussions can be made in the CCC.

**New Action Item 1:** *Chair to liaise with CCC on preferred date for November Meeting.*

Stratford CCC November meeting date settled as 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023.

The Chair followed up on discussions within the previous CCC meeting regarding an update on the funding of Stratford Park; Tenders for the proposed works close on 1 September 2023 then works will commence.

No other business arising.

## **6. Correspondence**

Details of correspondence was included in the meeting agenda. There was no further discussion.

## **7. Company Reports and Overview of Activities**

SCPL presented the Company Reports and Overview of Activities:

1. Progress at Mine: Mr Cullen advised mining operations continued in Avon North Open Cut. Backfilling of the Roseville West (RVW) Pit continued in Q2 2023 with the cessation of tipping into water which is the end of high-risk work within the RVW Pit. Mr Cullen provided an update that in September 2023 SCPL would be cutting back from 2 excavators to 1 excavator and a proportional reduction in haul trucks. The reduction in fleet will also coincide with a reduction in workforce. The workforce have been notified and reductions will take effect in September 2023. The chair asked if the workforce is predominately local. Mr Cullen stated yes, with some exceptions of staff traveling from areas such as Newcastle, Maitland and Forster.

Mr Kevin Lowrey asked if there will be any changes with proposed voids. Mr Plain replied the final landform hasn't changed from the version in the Rehabilitation Management Plan (RMP) submitted in 2022, although noted this was different to the landform in the Development Consent. There would be three final voids at Stratford Coal; the RVW Pit, Avon North Pit and Stratford Main Pit.

**New Action Item 1:** SCPL to provide Mr Lowrey with a copy of *Plan 1: Final Landform Features* within the 2022 RMP.

Mr Cullen also advised that SCPL is continuing supplying to domestic scheme (Coal Power Stations).

2. Environmental & community activities including monitoring, mine closure and rehabilitation: (*refer to CCC presentation available on website for further detail*). Items discussed by exception:

Cr Katheryn Stinson asked if any complaints received relate to blast results. Mr Thomas Kirkwood responded that no complaints have received in 2023.

Mr Ryan Fenning asked if SCPL have seen any localised hazard reduction burns, Mr Kirkwood stated that he hasn't seen much smoke in the local environment but has witnessed a few small burns to the south of Stratford within the last month.

Cr Stinson asked for additional clarification on blast monitoring locations. Mr Kirkwood stated that a reduction of blast monitors is proposed within the next review of the Blast Management Plan as blasting has ceased within Stratford East Pit.

Mr Lowrey stated that there has been increased truck noise lately and asked what the mitigation measures for predicted noise and weather levels are? Mr Kirkwood responded that a forecast of weather predictions is sent to the OCEs and Environmental Team. When a temperature inversion is predicted, the first mitigation measure is reducing stockpile dozers to first gear or parking them up. Additionally, trucks can be restricted to use low gears and directed to lower dump faces to reduce potential noise impacts.

Mr Plain followed up that original noise modelling for the Stratford Extension Project had predicted higher noise levels near Stratford Village during RVW Pit backfilling operations. Mr Lowrey suggested

undertaking monitoring at areas of potential impact during periods of inversions (7am-10am) as has been done previously.

**New Action Item 2:** SCPL to review and undertake Attended Noise Monitoring during times of predicted strong inversions over the next few months at locations of greatest impact.

Mr Richard Clarke asked for an update on the proposal to supply water from site to Council for road maintenance activities. Mr Kirkwood responded that that proposal requires obtaining an EPL Licence variation and is currently on pause following two years of above average rainfall as Council did not need additional water sources. Mr Kirkwood stated that SCPL plan to resume the project to secure future water supply to Mid Coast Council road work crews.

Mr Clarke asked SCPL if all offset areas are owned by Stratford Coal, Mr Kirkwood stated yes. Mr Bignell then asked how SCPL proposes to manage Setaria in offset planting areas. Mr Kirkwood replied that it is almost impossible in these areas, in particular the early stages of planting areas. He stated that as offsets mature SCPL would like to implement controlled burn programs. The CCC agreed that Setaria management will be a considerable issue for site and the entire Gloucester area. Mr Kirkwood added that slashing is utilised to manage grass cover when possible. Mr Plain added that as offset areas progress, the Setaria would get “shaded” out as mature native species get a larger canopy cover.

Mr Plain presented a brief update on the Stratford Closure Planning activities which included an update of activities at both Stratford and Duralie sites.

Cr Stinson asked if the workforce knows about upcoming changes. Mr Cullen stated that discussions to workforce have been ongoing since September 2022 and final discussions on workforce changes happen this month.

Mr Lowrey asked how many trucks will run under one excavator – Mr Plain stated that the circuit can run six trucks, however eight trucks will be kept at Stratford. The three larger haul trucks (CAT 789s) will be decommissioned and removed from site.

Cr Stinson asked when the washery will be decommissioned. Mr Plain replied that infrastructure decommissioning will commence in early 2025.

Current closure planning activities will include further technical studies, including model validation.

Mr Lowrey asked if models will be backed up with monitoring data and formal verification. Mr Plain replied that closure assessments will include a suite of environmental monitoring requirements post closure to verify the models and to achieve landform signoff (approx. 2035 onwards).

Mr Plain provided a further update on the original mine closure risk assessment which was undertaken as part of the RMP. As SCPL is now halfway through the mine closure planning project, SCPL has completed a mid-point mine closure risk assessment to review new risks and assess mitigation measures of original risks.

Mr Lowrey asked about the post closure public risk assessment and if it is too early in the process to define what the mitigation measures would be around final voids. Mr Plain agreed that the main public risk is the final voids and that discussions are ongoing and some voids, in particular RVW Pit due to its proximity to Stratford Village, would have a higher risk.

Mr Plain presented an update on Dr Mark Sargent’s Socioeconomic Impact Assessment (SIA) – Dr Sargent has been engaged by SCPL to provide information on closure legacy initiatives including case studies within the mining industry and other industries where companies have closed and the impact on the local community. The report will look at what has been done well and what hasn’t been done well in regard to legacy programs and provide recommendations on what initiatives could be implemented by Yancoal to mitigate the socio-economic impacts on the local community.

Cr Stinson made comment that there is already a level of expectation on Yancoal within the community to deliver legacy funding and that this is being pushed by several community groups. Cr Stinson then asked if there are formal agreements or discussions being made within the local community and if so, would there be a level of transparency so any funding can be presented to a broader community. Mr Plain agreed that there is a level of expectation on Yancoal and stated that within the mine closure risk assessment and as part of the SEIA, SCPL is reviewing contemporary guidelines on mine closure and examples of other companies supporting the community through closure transition. Mr Plain stated that Yancoal hasn't yet decided what they want any legacy program to look like within the Gloucester Valley. Mr Plain welcomed community discussion on potential opportunities or initiatives and all discussions would be transparent and open to a wider community.

3. *Stratford Renewable Energy Hub (SREH)*

Mr Plain provided an update to the CCC on the Stratford Renewable Energy Hub (SREH) project. The project is still completing the Feasibility Study which is expected to be completed in Q1 2024 (approx. February). The Feasibility Study includes baseline environmental studies and investigations which includes initial stakeholder engagement. Drilling works to investigate ground conditions are progressing well and are expected to end in December 2023.

Mr Plain added that Yancoal is still investigating the potential approval pathway (e.g. Critical State Infrastructure, or State Significant Development).

Mr Lowrey raised discussion on comments made at the previous Stratford CCC on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2023 in regard to the proposed solar panel location. Mr Lowrey is seeking additional information on if proposed panel locations have been decided. Mr Plain responded that SCPL could provide the indicative solar panel location figure to Mr Lowrey. Mr Plain emphasised that the proposed locations at this stage of the project are indicative and no impact assessments have been undertaken. Any existing cleared areas owned by Yancoal near the SREH have been captured as a potential solar panel location.

Mr Lowrey commented that reflection from solar panels may be an issue. Mr Clarke added comment that by placing approx. 600ha of solar panels has the potential to remove 1,200 head of cattle from the local community.

***New Action Item 3:*** SCPL to provide the indicative solar panel location figure for the SREH project.

## **8. General Business**

Cr Stinson raised discussion on the previous meeting minutes on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2023 that Council has investigated the use of bollards at Stratford Park. Cr Stinson confirmed that Council is looking at maximising the free camping parking areas but keeping them away from the park facilities.

Mr Plain presented the proposed changes to the current positive and restrictive covenants associated with the Stratford Offsets, as first presented at the May 11<sup>th</sup> 2023 CCC Meeting. There are currently two dwellings that were originally included in the spatial data for the surrounding offset areas. Stratford Coal are seeking to have the residential properties excised from these biodiversity areas. Mr Plain stated this was consistent with the original intent of the offset area and the inclusion of the dwellings in the original spatial data was an oversight which SCPL is seeking to amend. SCPL is currently seeking approval by the Department of Planning on the amendments.

The Chair discussed the revised Department of Planning and Environment Guidelines for CCCs.

**New Action Item 4:** Committee to sign off on Terms of Reference (TOR) at November CCC meeting and all declarations and code of conduct finalised to meet department requirements.

### **9. Proposed Meeting Schedule**

2023/2024 proposed meeting dates:

- 9:00am on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023
- 9:00am on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Meeting closed at 10:30am

### **Summary of Action Items from this meeting**

1. **Annual Action Item:** *MidCoast Council to provide an annual financial report each November on the spending of the Stratford Coal community enhancement contributions made to Council.*
2. **New Action 1:** *SCPL to provide Mr Lowrey with a copy of Plan 1: Final Landform Features within the 2022 RMP.*
3. **New Action Item 2:** *SCPL to review and undertake Attended Noise Monitoring during times of predicted strong inversions over the next few months at locations of greatest impact.*
4. **New Action Item 3:** *SCPL to provide the indicative solar panel location figure for the SREH project.*
5. **New Action Item 4:** *Committee to sign off on Terms of Reference (TOR) at November CCC meeting, all declarations and code of conduct finalised to meet department requirements.*