

Community Consultative Committee Details

CCC / Project Name:	Austar Coal Mine	Reporting Period:	January - December 2021
Independent Chairperson:	Margaret MacDonald-Hill	Proponent Contact:	Carly McCormack

1. Executive Summary

The Austar Community Consultative Committee was established in 2006 as part of a modification to the existing 1996 consent approval DA29/95 by the Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning. The Committee operates in accordance with the 2019 Department of Planning and Environment's Community Consultative Committee Guidelines for State Significant Projects.

The Austar Coal Mine is an underground coal mine situated in the Cessnock Council Local Government area, approximately ten kilometres south west of the town of Cessnock and in proximity to the villages of Paxton, Ellalong and Pelton in the Lower Hunter Valley of NSW. The Austar Coal Mine incorporates the former Pelton, Ellalong, Cessnock No. 1 (Kalingo) and Bellbird South Collieries and includes coal extraction, handling, processing and rail and road transport facilities. Extensive mining has been undertaken within the Austar Coal Mine since 1916. Historical mining was predominantly via bord and pillar mining and more recently via conventional longwall mining and Longwall Top Coal Caving (LTCC) methods. Following the placement of the mine on care and maintenance at the end of March 2020, Yancoal Management announced the closure of the mine one year later in March 2021. This announcement was received with mixed emotions as mining operations at the site had been ongoing since 1916.

The committee comprises:

- four local community representatives;
- one elected Cessnock City Council representative;
- one representative from the Cessnock Police Local Area Command;
- two Austar Coal Mine representatives, with attendance from other personnel as required;
- one independent Chairperson.

There have been no changes to the composition of the committee, members are long term and as such, have a vast knowledge of the mine's operations and a good rapport with Austar personnel.

With the reduced meeting schedule, Covid-19 did have some impact on the planned biannual meetings. The March meeting was a face-to-face meeting, in observance of all health requirements, whilst the escalating virus situation saw the September meeting conducted by video-conference. Both meetings had the majority of committee members present with Austar personnel providing detailed PowerPoint presentations to all members.

The major focus for the 2021 meetings was discussion on all matters pertaining to mine closure; redeployment of staff and redundancy options, rehabilitation and the Aberdare Emplacement Area, what infrastructure would remain, options for the retention of the

railway line, community support and the ongoing role of the committee. Other topics of discussion for the reporting period also included but not limited to:

- general environmental management and monitoring, including air quality, noise, surface water and groundwater, subsidence and vibration monitoring
- current activities, land and bushfire management, rehabilitation activities
- review of environmental management strategy and management plans to closure
- mining leases
- final Subsidence Survey Bellbird South Mining Area
- environmental incidents
- community complaints
- community sponsorship and donations
- 2020-21 Annual Review
- Mine Closure Planning Activities
- Review of Independent Environmental Audit.

2. CCC activities over last 12 months

- Committee meetings were held in the months of March and September 2021.
- Attendance at meetings is consistent, as the committee sets its meeting dates at the end of each calendar year for the ensuing year to avoid any known potential conflicts.
- No site tours were undertaken during the period because of Covid-19 restrictions.
- No joint CCC meetings were held during the period.

3. Key issues

The key issue for the committee during this period and well into the future is expected to be mine closure planning. The committee is aware this will be a long and complex process and remains supportive of the Austar mine and personnel.

Issue	Actions Taken	Next Steps
What does mine closure mean	Austar have provided comprehensive information on the planning process, timing, studies and expectations to the March and September meetings.	Ongoing.
Bellbird South Mining Area	Final results of subsidence survey provided to March 2021 meeting.	Completed.


4. Focus for next 12 months

The planned activities for 2022 will continue to be guided by the contributions of the CCC members. These activities are likely to include:

- mine closure
- Rehabilitation.

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 8 2022