



# MACHEnergy

Mount Pleasant Operation

A JOINT VENTURE WITH  
**JCDA**  
Japan Coal Development Australia

## Section 6

Engagement

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## 6 ENGAGEMENT

MACH is committed to continuing open and constructive dialogue with the local community and stakeholders.

This section describes the consultation feedback obtained prior to and during the preparation of this EIS and how this feedback has been considered by MACH. This section also outlines the ongoing community initiatives and consultation programs that MACH has established in the region.

### 6.1 ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

Open communication with stakeholders has been advocated by MACH during consultation. The key objectives of MACH's ongoing consultation with stakeholders are to:

- engage with Project stakeholders about the existing Mount Pleasant Operation and the progress and nature of the Project;
- recognise and respond to local interests and concerns regarding the existing Mount Pleasant Operation and the Project;
- continue the ongoing dialogue between MACH and local landholders and neighbours; and
- develop appropriate strategies to enhance positive impacts and minimise potential negative impacts.

Feedback obtained through engagement with key stakeholders has provided the opportunity to identify issues of concern or interest, and to consider these issues within the Project design and this EIS (Section 6.2).

The consultation undertaken during the preparation of this EIS is in accordance with the SEARs (Attachment 1) and is adequate and appropriate for a State Significant Development under Part 4 of the EP&A Act.

### 6.2 RECOGNITION OF STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

MACH has carefully considered the feedback provided by the local community, government agencies and other stakeholders on previously approved Mount Pleasant Operation modifications (Section 2.1).

MACH has sought to address stakeholder concerns and perceptions through commitment to a number of significant Project design measures, genuine community engagement and successful environmental management.

Primarily, the Project would optimise the recovery of coal resources from within the existing Mount Pleasant Operation MLs, therefore minimising new surface disturbance areas associated with the extraction of the additional coal (Figure 1-4).

Furthermore, the following key Project design measures and constraints have been incorporated by MACH in response to stakeholder feedback:

- incorporation of mobile plant and fixed plant noise mitigation in the design and construction of the Mount Pleasant Operation, and continuation of this commitment for the Project;
- staging increases in extraction, handling and processing of ROM coal as the mine progressively moves away from Muswellbrook to limit potential impacts to surrounding receivers;
- development of an integrated waste rock emplacement landform that incorporates geomorphic drainage design principles for hydrological stability, and varying topographic relief to be more natural in exterior appearance;
- forgoing a portion of the approved disturbance area under Development Consent DA 92/97 (i.e. the Relinquishment Area) to compensate for new Project infill disturbance areas (i.e. the Additional Disturbance Area);
- realignment of the Northern Link Road to improve traffic safety and efficiency in light of MACH no longer seeking to close Wybong Road and construct the Western Link Road, as currently approved (Section 3.13.4 and 3.13.5); and
- forgoing a portion of the available, economical coal resources to allow for the development of a final void with a smaller extent and gentler slopes than is optimal from an economic efficiency basis.

Further discussion on the consideration of feasible alternatives and justification of the Project design are provided in Section 8.

MACH has also implemented the following additional initiatives:

- being a positive contributor to the local community through community contributions, assistance programs and sponsorships (Section 6.4.5);
- continuation of the existing recruitment strategy that prioritises recruitment of workers from local areas (i.e. Muswellbrook and Upper Hunter LGAs);
- making key MACH personnel approachable and available for consultation to allow for direct consideration of stakeholder feedback; and
- proactively progressing landform shaping and rehabilitation associated with current approved operations at the Mount Pleasant Operation to address concerns regarding the visual impact of mine landforms from Muswellbrook and other public viewpoints.

Consultation activities with stakeholders are described in detail in Section 6.3. Where relevant, references are provided to the EIS sections and/or specialist appendices where the issues raised are considered and addressed.

## **6.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT CONSULTATION**

### **6.3.1 State Government Agencies**

MACH has consulted with a range of State government agencies in relation to the Project to obtain feedback on the proposed assessment approach, potential impacts and proposed mitigation measures for the Project.

MACH continues to consult with relevant State government agencies on a regular basis in relation to the Project and the ongoing construction and mining activities of the Mount Pleasant Operation.

#### ***NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (formerly Department of Planning and Environment)***

The DPIE has been regularly consulted during the preparation of this EIS. A summary of consultation conducted with the DPIE is provided in Table 6-1.

MACH will continue to consult with the DPIE throughout the EIS assessment process to respond to any issues raised during the EIS public exhibition process.

#### ***Mining, Exploration and Geoscience (within the Department of Regional NSW)***

MACH presented a Conceptual Project Development Plan (CPDP) to Mining, Exploration and Geoscience (MEG) within the Department of Regional NSW (formerly Division of Resources and Geoscience) on 2 October 2019, prior to the lodgement of the Project Scoping Report. No particular matters requiring attention during the EIS phase were raised in the CPDP meeting.

MEG provided input to the SEARs on 20 January 2020. The input from MEG has been considered in this EIS including:

- a comprehensive description of the Project (Section 3);
- a summary of the local and regional geology and the physical dimensions of the coal resource (Section 3.2);
- a copy of the most recent resource and/or reserve statement (submitted to MEG independently of the State Significant Development application);
- an assessment of resource recovery (Section 3.2);
- a geotechnical assessment supporting the mine design and mining method (Attachment 13);
- a production schedule for the life of the Project (Section 3.7);
- an assessment of the economics of the Project (Appendix O);
- consideration of potential resource sterilisation in relation to any proposed biodiversity offsets areas (Appendix E);
- justification for the proposed mine design, schedule and final landform (Section 8); and
- consideration of the requirement for mining titles (Section 5.2.8).

A briefing on the Project's resource and economic particulars was also undertaken on-site with MEG on 10 November 2020. No additional issues or concerns were raised during the site visit.

MACH submitted a Resource and Reserve Statement to MEG on 3 November 2020, that complies with the current version of the *Australasian Code for Reporting of Exploration Results, Mineral Resources and Ore Reserves* (the JORC Code).

**Table 6-1**  
**Consultation Summary – NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment**

Date of Consultation	Consultation Context	Key Issues Raised and Relevant EIS References
8 October 2019	Scoping Meeting for the Project, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction of the Project and its key components.</li> <li>Interaction with the approved Mount Pleasant Operation and Modifications (Mod 3 and Mod 4).</li> <li>Project Engagement Program.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final landform and void, final land use and rehabilitation (Attachment 8).</li> <li>Importance of the key impact assessment studies, including groundwater, surface water, Aboriginal cultural heritage, traffic and transport impact and social assessments (Appendices C, D, G, J and N).</li> <li>Visual impact management, in particular those associated with Stage 2 rail infrastructure (Appendix M).</li> </ul>
9 October 2019	SIA Scoping Meeting for the Project, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overview of the proposed SIA methodology and discussion of how it conforms to the SIA Guideline.</li> <li>Discussion of consultation proposed to occur during the SIA scoping phase.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The SIA should meet the principles of the SIA Guideline (Appendix N).</li> </ul>
20 December 2019	Submission of the Request for SEARs supported by a Scoping Report.	
17 February 2020	SEARs issued.	
29 May 2020	Meeting to provide an update on the Project, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Status and timing of the Stage 2 rail load-out facility, loop and spur.</li> <li>Key specialist studies for the Project and initial findings.</li> <li>Minor clarifications on the SEARs.</li> <li>SIA engagement methods during COVID-19 pandemic.</li> <li>Provisional EIS submission timing and further DPIE consultation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultation methods in COVID-19 context.</li> <li>Status of rehabilitation at the Mount Pleasant Operation (Attachment 8).</li> <li>Consideration of potential agricultural impacts in light of the Project remaining within the existing Mount Pleasant Operation MLs (Appendix I).</li> </ul>
2 October 2020	Supplementary SEARs issued.	
13 October 2020	Teleconference to discuss EIS submission and assessment timing of processes in light of COVID-19.	
17 December 2020	Meeting to discuss specialist study findings. Key discussions included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Findings related to groundwater, surface water, biodiversity, heritage, transport, air quality, health and operational noise.</li> <li>Consultation undertaken for the EIS.</li> <li>Process for submission of the EIS and public exhibition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key assessment issues raised at other recent major mining proposals in the Hunter Valley and how they may apply to the Project (Sections 7 and 8).</li> </ul>

***NSW Resources Regulator***

The NSW Resources Regulator provided input to the SEARs on 20 January 2020. The NSW Resources Regulator did not provide any Project-specific assessment requirements.

MACH held a videoconference with representatives of the NSW Resources Regulator (Rehabilitation and Securities Panel) on 2 December 2020. MACH provided a briefing on rehabilitation methods at the Mount Pleasant Operation and the proposed Project final landform (Attachment 8).

***NSW Biodiversity and Conservation Division  
(within the NSW Department of Planning,  
Industry and Environment)***

A summary of consultation conducted with the NSW Biodiversity and Conservation Division (BCD) within the DPIE is provided in Table 6-2.

***Heritage NSW (within the Department of Premier  
and Cabinet)***

A Project summary letter was sent to Heritage NSW (within the Department of Premier and Cabinet) on 2 November 2020 to provide information on the Project and a summary of the outcomes of the ACHA and the Historical Heritage Assessment (Appendices G and H).

Heritage NSW responded on 25 November 2020, acknowledging MACH's correspondence and advising it had no additional comments with respect to the proposed approach to managing Aboriginal cultural heritage for the Project.

***Heritage Council of NSW***

A Project summary letter was sent to the Heritage Council of NSW on 2 November 2020 to provide information on the Project and a summary of the outcomes of the ACHA and the Historical Heritage Assessment (Appendices G and H).

***NSW Environment Protection Authority***

A summary of consultation conducted with the EPA is provided in Table 6-3.

The EPA provided input to the SEARs on 15 January 2020. Given the proximity of the Project to Muswellbrook, the EPA requested that particular attention is given to the assessment of cumulative impacts, particularly in regards to air quality. The EPA did not provide any other Project-specific assessment requirements.

The EPA's input to the SEARs has been considered in the description of the Project (Section 3), Noise and Blasting Assessment (Appendix A), Air Quality Assessment (Appendix B), Groundwater Assessment (Appendix C), Surface Water Assessment (Appendix D) and the Greenhouse Gas Assessment (Appendix S).

***NSW Department of Primary Industries******NSW Department of Primary Industries - Agriculture***

A Project summary letter was sent to the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) – Agriculture on 2 October 2020 to provide information on the Project and a briefing on the findings of the Soil Resource Assessment (Attachment 1 of Appendix I).

MACH held a teleconference with the DPI – Agriculture on 23 October 2020. This included a briefing on the Project and discussions regarding BSAL mapping, CIC mapping and existing biodiversity offset areas established as part of the Mount Pleasant Operation EPBC Act approval.

No issues have been raised by DPI – Agriculture in relation to the Project to date.

***Department of Primary Industries - Fisheries***

A Project summary letter was sent to the DPI – Fisheries on 2 December 2020 to provide information on the Project and a briefing on the findings of the Aquatic Ecology Assessment (Appendix F).

***Department of Planning, Industry and  
Environment – Water***

The DPIE – Water and the National Resource Access Regulator (NRAR) provided input to the SEARs on 16 January 2020. The DPIE – Water and the NRAR did not provide any Project-specific assessment requirements.

MACH held a teleconference with the DPIE – Water and the NRAR on 6 October 2020. This included a briefing on the Project, discussions regarding changes to the water management system and the site water balance and findings of the Groundwater Assessment and Surface Water Assessment (Appendices C and D).

**Table 6-2**  
**Consultation Summary – NSW Biodiversity and Conservation Division**  
**(within the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment)**

Date of Consultation	Consultation Context	Key Issues Raised and Relevant EIS References
8 January 2020	Letter documenting input to the SEARs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Project-specific assessment requirements provided.</li> <li>• The BCD's standard environmental assessment requirements have been considered in the Surface Water Assessment (Appendix D), BDAR (Appendix E), ACHA (Appendix G), and Historical Heritage Assessment (Appendix H).</li> </ul>
6 October 2020	Videoconference to provide a Project overview and discuss specialist study findings. Key discussions included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing EPBC Act approval and Project referral to the DAWE.</li> <li>• Findings related to biodiversity assessments and impact minimisation measures.</li> <li>• EIS submission timing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requested further detail on the relative biodiversity values of the proposed Project Additional Disturbance Area and proposed Relinquishment Area, and how this may relate to potential offsetting requirements (Section 7.10 and Appendix E).</li> </ul>

**Table 6-3**  
**Consultation Summary – NSW Environment Protection Authority**

Date of Consultation	Consultation Context	Key Issues Raised and Relevant EIS References
30 October 2019	Initial Project briefing, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of the Project and its key components.</li> <li>• Interaction with the approved Mount Pleasant Operation and Modifications (Mod 3 and Mod 4).</li> <li>• Timing of EIS preparation and overview of the stages involved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cumulative air quality emissions (Appendix B).</li> <li>• Water availability and security (Appendix D).</li> <li>• Consideration and implementation of various dust control measures (Appendix B).</li> </ul>
2 December 2020	Project update, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Briefing on findings of operational noise, blasting, air quality, health, surface water, groundwater and final landform designs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No specific issues raised, EPA to review EIS in detail.</li> </ul>

During the teleconference, representatives of the DPIE – Water requested:

- analysis of the risk of seepage from the Eastern Out-of-Pit Emplacement to the Hunter River alluvium;
- quantification of post-mining inflows, including from saturated spoil material; and
- details regarding groundwater model calibration.

These requests have been addressed in the Groundwater Assessment (Appendix C).

#### ***NSW Natural Resources Access Regulator***

A representative of the NRAR attended the meeting with the DPIE – Water on 6 October 2020. The NRAR did not raise any issues.

#### ***Department of Planning, Industry and Environment – Crown Lands***

The DPIE – Crown Lands provided input to the SEARs on 22 January 2020, advising that all Crown land within a Mining Lease must be subject to a Compensation Agreement issued under Section 265 of the *NSW Mining Act, 1992*.

A Project summary letter was sent to DPIE – Crown Lands on 2 October 2020, to provide information on the Project and confirm that MACH has an existing Compensation Agreement in place for Crown land within ML 1645.

#### **Transport for NSW**

Transport for NSW (TfNSW) (formerly NSW Roads and Maritime Services [RMS]) provided input to the SEARs on 20 January 2020, which included a number of requirements for a traffic and transport study.

The Road Transport Assessment (Appendix J) has been prepared in consideration of the input to the SEARs from TfNSW.

A letter was sent to TfNSW on 21 February 2020, requesting confirmation of the preferred route and likely completion date of the Muswellbrook Bypass. TfNSW responded on 24 March 2020, advising of the preferred route and anticipated completion date of the Muswellbrook Bypass. In addition, TfNSW recommended that this EIS considers potential impacts of the Project both with and without approval of the Muswellbrook Bypass. This feedback has been considered in Appendix J.

A Project summary letter was sent to TfNSW on 30 November 2020 to provide information on the Project and findings of the Road Transport Assessment (Appendix J).

#### **NSW Health**

A Project summary letter was sent to NSW Health on 30 November 2020 to provide information on the Project and findings of the Noise and Blasting Assessment, Air Quality Assessment, Surface Water Assessment and Human Health Assessment (Appendices A, B, D, and R).

#### **Hunter Local Land Services**

A Project summary letter was sent to Hunter Local Land Services on 2 October 2020 to provide information on the Project, a description of relevant specialist studies in preparation, Project interaction with Crown land and weed management. A Project briefing with Hunter Local Land Services was undertaken via videoconference on 27 November 2020. No specific concerns with respect to the Project were raised. The potential timing of rehabilitation of Crown land parcels within ML 1645 was discussed.

#### **NSW Spatial Services**

NSW Spatial Services is the provider of spatial and land information services for NSW. A Project summary letter was sent to NSW Spatial Services on 30 November 2020 in relation to survey control marks that may be impacted by the Project.

NSW Spatial Services responded on 1 December 2020, providing advice on the process of submitting an application to the Surveyor General for consent to disturb survey marks for the Project.

#### **Dams Safety NSW**

A Project summary letter was sent to Dams Safety NSW on 2 October 2020 to provide information on the Project and its potential interaction with declared dams under section 5 of the *NSW Dams Safety Act, 2015*.

#### **NSW Rural Fire Service**

The NSW Rural Fire Service participated in a meeting conducted by JAL on 22 July 2020 for the SIA (Appendix N).

A Project summary letter was sent to the NSW Rural Fire Service on 2 October 2020 to provide information on the Project and advise that consideration of bushfire hazards will be detailed in the PHA for the Project (Appendix Q).

#### **NSW Treasurer**

MACH met with representatives of the NSW Treasurer on 21 September 2020. MACH provided the NSW Treasurer with an overview of the Project and a summary of the outcomes of the Economic Assessment (Appendix O).

#### **Elected Representatives**

MACH has consulted with various Federal, State and Local government elected representatives throughout preparation of this EIS, including briefings on the Project and the findings of relevant specialist studies.

#### **6.3.2 Local Government Agencies**

The Project is wholly located within the Muswellbrook LGA. The Project is adjacent to the Upper Hunter LGA. The Singleton LGA is less proximal to the Project, but is a source of employees at the existing Mount Pleasant Operation (Appendix N).

MACH has consulted with MSC, Upper Hunter Shire Council and Singleton Council in relation to the Project.

#### ***Muswellbrook Shire Council***

A summary of consultation conducted with MSC is provided in Table 6-4.

MACH will continue to consult with MSC throughout the EIS assessment process to respond to any issues or concerns raised. This consultation will also involve discussions regarding a revised Project Voluntary Planning Agreement for the Mount Pleasant Operation.

#### ***Upper Hunter Shire Council***

A summary of consultation conducted with the Upper Hunter Shire Council is provided in Table 6-5.

MACH will continue to consult with the Upper Hunter Shire Council throughout the EIS assessment process to respond to any issues or concerns raised.

#### ***Singleton Council***

MACH and JAL conducted a videoconference with Singleton Council in July 2020 to discuss the Project and existing social impacts of the Mount Pleasant Operation.

Key issues raised by representatives of the Singleton Council in relation to the Project included:

- amenity impacts, housing and competition between councils as preferred residential locations;
- consideration of legacy impacts associated with transition from the coal industry and electricity generation (Section 7.17.4 and Appendix N); and
- the importance of forward planning for closure of the Mount Pleasant Operation (Attachment 8).

A follow up letter was also sent to Singleton Council on 30 November 2020.

MACH will continue to consult with Singleton Council throughout the EIS assessment process to respond to any issues or concerns raised.

### **6.3.3 Federal Government Agencies**

#### ***Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment***

MACH undertook consultation with the DAWE (previously the Commonwealth Department of Environment and Energy [DEE]) in July and August 2020 as part of the lodgement of a Referral under the EPBC Act.

On 27 August 2020, the referred action was determined to be a “controlled action” with respect to water resources. A description of how the assessment requirements relevant to the EPBC Act have been addressed in this EIS is provided in Attachment 2.

MACH has also consulted extensively with DAWE in 2019 and 2020 with respect to the management and security of its biodiversity offset lands under EPBC 2011/5795. These offsets are of direct relevance to the Project (Section 7.10).

### **6.3.4 Infrastructure Owners and Service Providers**

#### ***Telstra***

Telstra owns optic fibre and copper cable telecommunications infrastructure in the vicinity of the Project.

A Project summary letter was sent to Telstra on 2 November 2020 to provide information on the Project and telecommunications infrastructure requirements.

#### ***Ausgrid***

Power to the Project site is provided by Ausgrid via 66 kV distribution powerlines.

A Project summary letter was sent to Ausgrid on 2 March 2020 to provide information on the Project and the status of the approved relocation of a 66 kV electricity transmission line at the Mount Pleasant Operation. A Project update letter was subsequently sent to Ausgrid on 2 November 2020 to provide information on the Project.

#### ***Australian Rail Track Corporation***

The Hunter Valley rail network is managed by the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC). The Muswellbrook-Ulan Rail Line and the Main Northern Railway, which form part of the Hunter Valley coal rail network, would continue to be used for product coal transportation by the Project.

**Table 6-4**  
**Consultation Summary – Muswellbrook Shire Council**

Date of Consultation	Consultation Context	Key Issues Raised and Relevant EIS References <sup>1</sup>
1 November 2019	Initial Project briefing, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of the Project and its key components.</li> <li>• Interaction with the approved Mount Pleasant Operation and Modifications (Mod 3 and Mod 4).</li> <li>• Scoping of the SIA.</li> <li>• Timing of EIS preparation and overview of the stages involved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final landform and void (Attachment 8).</li> <li>• Employment, housing and economic impacts of the Project (Appendices N and O).</li> </ul>
1 May 2020	Videoconference to discuss the MSC <i>Mine-Affected Roads Network Plan</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiations regarding road upgrades that would be undertaken as part of the Project.</li> </ul>
9 July 2020	Videoconference with MSC, MACH and JAL in relation to the SIA, to discuss existing impacts of the Mount Pleasant Operation and potential impacts of the Project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential impacts on local groundwater and surface water availability (Appendices C and D).</li> <li>• Generation of potential amenity impacts for residents (Appendices A, B and M).</li> <li>• Potential impacts on availability of properties for farming purposes (Appendix N).</li> </ul>
17 November 2020	Meeting to discuss key findings of specialist studies, Project final landform and commence Voluntary Planning Agreement negotiations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Justification of final void, final void water quality and potential post-mining uses (Attachment 8).</li> <li>• Mine Affected Road Strategy implications for the Project (Appendix J).</li> <li>• Discussions regarding the negotiation of a new Voluntary Planning Agreement for the Project (Section 8).</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Informal feedback/comments raised by discussion participants.

**Table 6-5**  
**Consultation Summary – Upper Hunter Shire Council**

Date of Consultation	Consultation Context	Key Issues Raised and Relevant EIS References
29 October 2019	Initial Project briefing, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of the Project and its key components.</li> <li>• Interaction with the approved Mount Pleasant Operation and Modifications (Mod 3 and Mod 4).</li> <li>• Timing of EIS preparation and overview of the stages involved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration of potential impacts on Aberdeen (Section 7).</li> </ul>
4 August 2020	Videoconference with Upper Hunter Shire Council, MACH and JAL in relation to the SIA, to discuss existing impacts of the Mount Pleasant Operation and potential impacts of the Project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities to train and employ local people (Section 7.17.4 and Appendix N).</li> <li>• Competition with local businesses for skilled workers (Section 7.17.3 and Appendix N).</li> <li>• Potential impacts on housing affordability (Appendix N).</li> <li>• Potential impacts on availability of childcare services (Section 7.17.3 and Appendix N).</li> <li>• Council's policy of opposition to mining.</li> </ul>
30 November 2020	Letter to Upper Hunter Shire Council providing a Project update and offer of a teleconference to discuss findings of specialist studies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No issues raised to date.</li> </ul>

MACH met with representatives of the ARTC on 26 November 2019. MACH provided the ARTC with an overview of the Project and Project requirements for rail track capacity and train path availability.

Following the meeting, MACH sent a letter to ARTC on 2 December 2019, formally requesting confirmation that there would be sufficient rail capacity to accommodate the Project. ARTC provided correspondence to MACH on 28 August 2020, confirming that there would be sufficient network and coal chain capacity available for the Project.

Given there would be sufficient network capacity for the Project and there would be no change to the existing rail transport routes as part of the Project (Section 3.8), no further assessment of rail network efficiency is required.

#### **Hunter Valley Coal Chain Coordinator**

The Hunter Valley Coal Chain Coordinator (HVCCC) plans and co-ordinates the co-operative daily operation and long-term capacity alignment of the Hunter Valley rail network.

MACH met with representatives of the HVCCC on 25 February 2020. MACH provided the HVCCC with an overview of the Project and Project requirements for rail track capacity and train path availability.

As part of ARTC's correspondence on 28 August 2020, the HVCCC confirmed that there would be sufficient network and coal chain capacity available for the Project.

#### **Port Waratah Coal Services**

Port Waratah Coal Services Limited (PWCS) owns and manages the Kooragang and Carrington Coal Terminals, which export coal at the Port of Newcastle.

MACH met with representatives of the PWCS on 26 November 2019 to provide information on the Project.

#### **Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group**

The Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group (NCIG) owns and operates the Newcastle Coal export terminal, which exports coal at the Port of Newcastle.

MACH met with the representatives of the NCIG on 30 January 2020 to provide information on the Project.

#### **Newcastle Ports Corporation**

MACH met with representatives of the Newcastle Ports Corporation (NPC) on 27 November 2019 to provide information on the Project.

#### **Siding Spring Observatory**

The Siding Spring Observatory is located approximately 194 km from the Project at its closest point. As such, the Project is within the Dark Sky Region, as defined in the *Dark Sky Planning Guideline* (DP&E, 2016a).

A Project summary letter was sent to the Siding Spring Observatory on 2 October 2020 to provide information on the Project and the findings of the Visual and Landscape Assessment (Appendix M).

#### **6.3.5 Surrounding Mines and Resource Companies**

##### **Bengalla Mine**

A Project briefing teleconference was held with representatives of the Bengalla Mine on 26 November 2019 to provide information on the Project.

Further information on the Project was provided via a Project summary letter sent to the Bengalla Mine on 6 February 2020.

MACH has continued to consult with Bengalla Mine throughout 2020 regarding the existing Mount Pleasant Operation and potential Project water management interactions in the future.

##### **Dartbrook Mine**

MACH met with a representative of the Dartbrook Mine on 19 November 2019 to provide information on the Project.

A Project summary letter was sent to the Dartbrook Mine on 6 February 2020 to provide further information on the Project.

A videoconference was held with a representative of Dartbrook Mine on 15 March 2020. During the videoconference MACH provided an update on the status of the Project.

Over the course of 2020, MACH has also investigated the feasibility of beneficial re-use of excess water held in the Dartbrook Mine underground workings in consultation with Australian Pacific Coal Limited.

In addition, letters were sent to the Dartbrook Mine in November 2019, March 2020 and October 2020, requesting land access to conduct Aboriginal cultural heritage and biodiversity surveys for the Project.

#### **Mt Arthur Coal Mine**

A Project summary letter was sent to the Mt Arthur Coal Mine on 6 February 2020 to provide information on the Project.

#### **Mangoola Coal**

A Project summary letter was sent to the Mangoola Coal on 6 February 2020 to provide information on the Project.

#### **Muswellbrook Coal Company**

A Project summary letter was sent to the Muswellbrook Coal Company on 6 February 2020 to provide information on the Project.

#### **6.3.6 Public Consultation**

MACH maintains open lines of communication with the community through a number of community initiatives and local involvement. These mechanisms are described in Section 6.4.

In addition, MACH undertook the following specific consultation activities for this EIS:

- distributing regular Mount Pleasant Operation community newsletters to local residents and other stakeholders;
- where practical, the conduct of face-to-face meetings with directly affected landholders;
- providing multiple Project briefings to the Mount Pleasant Operation Community Consultative Committee (CCC);
- directly consulting with representatives of the Aboriginal community;
- a community survey as part of the SIA;
- consulting with local community groups; and
- briefing MACH's locally based staff and contractors.

The above consultation mechanisms are described in further details below.

Consultation completed as part of the SIA process is described in Section 6.3.7.

#### **Community Newsletters**

MACH prepared and distributed community newsletters that included information on the Project and its status during:

- December 2019;
- May 2020; and
- December 2020.

Newsletters were distributed to local residents as well as being emailed to key stakeholders, such as elected representatives and community groups.

#### **Meetings with Affected Landholders**

In the course of preparation of this EIS, MACH has consulted with affected landholders (i.e. the landholders where impact assessment has indicated that material noise, groundwater, air quality or other impacts may occur on the property).

#### **Briefings of Community Consultative Committees**

Section 6.4.1 provides further information on the CCC operated by MACH.

Updates on the status of the Project have been provided at all meetings of the Mount Pleasant Operation CCC since October 2019. CCC members have the opportunity to ask questions of MACH personnel about the Project design and proposed mitigation measures.

The CCC had a tour of the site on 12 December 2019.

A pre-lodgement CCC meeting was held on 20 November 2020, specifically to provide a briefing on the findings of key specialist studies for the Project.

Key issues raised by members of the CCC in relation to the Project has included:

- Concerns around construction of new dams affecting water flow downstream.
- Timing of closure of Castlerock Road.
- Positive feedback on the Mount Peasant Operation geomorphic design and construction work on the Eastern Out-of-Pit Emplacement.
- Discussion of the relationship of the Project to the MSC's *Mine Affected Road Strategy* (Appendix J).

### **Community Survey**

From 19 June to 31 August 2020, a community survey was conducted as part of the SIA.

The local community was encouraged to participate through the distribution of surveys via:

- the MACH website;
- advertisements in the *Hunter River Times*, *Muswellbrook Chronicle* and *Aberdeen Whisper*;
- a flyer distributed to all addresses in Muswellbrook, Denman and Aberdeen; and
- a text message to all phone numbers registered on the MACH suppliers and sponsor database.

A total of 126 survey responses were received. Findings of the community survey indicate that people who live closest to the Mount Pleasant Operation are more likely to report negative social impacts, while people who have a relationship with the Mount Pleasant Operation (e.g. an employee or supplier) are more likely to report positive social impacts.

Social impacts identified to have the largest inequity (i.e. range of responses) in the community survey included those related to:

- employment;
- economy;
- community cohesion;
- living environment; and
- visual amenity.

The issues raised in the survey responses are presented and addressed in the SIA (Appendix N) and Sections 7.17.3 and 7.17.4.

### **Aboriginal Communities**

Aboriginal community consultation for the Project was undertaken in accordance with *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation Requirements for Proponents 2010* (NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water [DECCW], 2010a) and clause 80C of the *NSW National Parks and Wildlife Regulation, 2009*.

A total of 88 Aboriginal stakeholders, including organisations and individuals, registered an interest and were consulted in relation to the ACHA process for the Project (Appendix G).

Consultation with the Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) regarding the Project has been extensive and involved multiple opportunities to provide feedback and comment. Consultation mechanisms included meetings, public notices, written and verbal correspondence, archaeological survey and participation in an Aboriginal Cultural Values Report (Environmental & Cultural Services, 2020).

Table 6-6 summarises the main stages of the Aboriginal heritage consultation process undertaken for the Project. A detailed account of the consultation process (including consultation records and a detailed consultation log) is provided in Appendix G.

Of the Aboriginal parties that registered an interest in the ACHA for the Project:

- three parties supported the assessment and management recommendations;
- one party responded with no comment on the assessment or recommendations;
- one party confirmed receipt of the draft ACHA;
- one party provided comments on the recommendations; and
- 82 parties did not respond to the request for comment.

A number of Aboriginal community groups also participated in the SIA, as discussed below.

### **Local Community Groups and Businesses**

MACH is in regular contact with local community groups through its active support of groups through sponsorships and donations (Section 6.4.5).

Consultation was conducted with the following environment and community groups or businesses by MACH and JAL as part of the SIA stakeholder consultation:

- Friends of the Upper Hunter;
- Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce and Industry;
- Scone Chamber of Commerce;
- EHP First National;
- Blackrock Industries;
- Supply Solutions Group;
- SGS Hunter Valley (Training);

**Table 6-6**  
**Summary of Aboriginal Heritage Consultation Undertaken for the Project**

Date of Consultation	Consultation Context
<b>Notification of Project and Registrations</b>	
4 May 2017	Letters requesting the names of Aboriginal parties or groups that may be interested in registering for the consultation process were sent to the Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC), OEH (Dubbo), MSC, Hunter Local Land Services, NTSCORP, National Native Title Tribunal and Office of the Registrar, in order to identify Aboriginal stakeholders.
9 – 26 May 2017	Responses to the above request were received from the Hunter Valley Aboriginal Corporation, Culturally Aware, Wanaruah LALC, OEH, Yinarr Cultural Services, MSC and Office of the Registrar.
29 May 2017	Letters seeking registrations of interest by 16 June 2017 were sent to the Aboriginal parties identified by the above step.
21 May – 2 June 2017	A public notice was placed in the Koori Mail and Singleton Argus on 31 May 2017, and in the Muswellbrook Chronicle on 2 June 2017, inviting interested Aboriginal parties or groups to register by 16 June 2017.
29 May – 16 June 2017	In total, 88 organisations and/or individuals registered an interest in the ACHA for the Project.
6 July 2017	A record of the names of RAPs, and registration correspondence materials, was provided to the OEH and Wanaruah LALC in accordance with <i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation Requirements for Proponents 2010</i> (DECCW, 2010a).
<b>Proposed Methodology Review and Information Session</b>	
10 October 2019	The Proposed Methodology for undertaking the ACHA was provided to RAPs. The information provided to RAPs included a request for review and feedback on the Proposed Methodology and invitations to attend an information session to discuss the Project and Proposed Methodology and to assist with the archaeological survey.
10 October – 11 November 2019	All feedback received from RAPs in regard to the Proposed Methodology was considered.
5 November 2019	An information session regarding the Project and the Proposed Methodology was held at the MACH site office.
<b>Archaeological Surveys</b>	
5 – 6 November 2019	Invitations were sent to the RAPs selected through MACH's standard RAPs involvement procedure (detailed in the AHMP) to assist with the archaeological field surveys.
13 – 14 November 2019	Aboriginal cultural heritage field surveys were conducted by an archaeologist from SEA accompanied by the representatives of the RAPs.
<b>Draft ACHA Review and Information Meeting</b>	
19 August 2020	A copy of the draft ACHA was provided to all RAPs for review and comment. The draft ACHA included survey results, archaeological and cultural significance assessment (based on feedback received during consultation and fieldwork), potential impacts and proposed mitigation and management measures.  Feedback was requested by 23 September 2020.  An invitation was also provided to all RAPs to attend an information session (online) on 2 September 2020, to discuss the findings and proposed management recommendations. The invitation noted that MACH will continue to monitor the situation and restrictions around COVID-19 and, when it is deemed safe to do so, will also offer RAPs the opportunity for a site inspection at the Mount Pleasant Operation.
2 September 2020	An online information session was held to discuss the findings and proposed management recommendations in the draft ACHA. One RAP elected to participate in the information session.
7 – 13 September 2020	Interviews were held with Aboriginal stakeholders who elected to participate in the cultural values assessment for the Aboriginal Cultural Values Report for the Project (Environmental & Cultural Services, 2020).
23 September 2020	A representative of MACH attempted to contact a selection of RAPs who had not yet provided comment.
19 August – 23 September 2020	Comments were received on the draft ACHA and were considered and included in the final ACHA.

Source: Appendix G.

- Aboriginal Community Development Fund (ACDF);
- Wonnaruwa Nation Aboriginal Corporation;
- Wanaruah LALC; and
- Denman, Aberdeen, Muswellbrook and Scone Healthy Environment Group.

In addition, MACH provided Project briefing letters to the following community and business groups in August and October 2020, with an invitation to be briefed in person/via videoconference if requested:

- Godolphin Kelvinside Stud;
- Hunter Thoroughbred Breeders Association; and
- Muswellbrook Shire Local and Family History Society.

#### **Staff and Contractors**

The Mount Pleasant Operation has an operational workforce of up to approximately 380 personnel<sup>1</sup>. A voluntary survey of the Mount Pleasant Operation workforce was undertaken for the Project SIA. A total of 157 members of the MACH workforce undertook the survey, of which 153 answered questions in relation to demographics and living arrangements. A total of 122 respondents indicated they live locally on a permanent basis, with 88% residing in the Muswellbrook, Upper Hunter and Singleton LGAs.

Briefings for staff have also been conducted during the development of this EIS.

#### **6.3.7 Social Impact Assessment**

MACH and JAL undertook consultation activities in support of the SIA for the Project (Appendix N) in addition to the broader consultation activities conducted by MACH.

Consultation in support of the SIA included:

- meetings with MSC, Upper Hunter Shire Council and Singleton Council;
- meetings with neighbouring residents, Aboriginal stakeholders, native title holders, community and environmental groups, service providers, industry groups and local businesses and suppliers;

- meetings with representatives of the DPIE;
- meetings with Mount Pleasant Operation CCC representatives;
- SIA community survey from 19 June 2020 to 31 August 2020; and
- SIA workforce survey from 8 July 2020 to 31 July 2020.

Further detail on the SIA consultation activities is provided in Appendix N.

### **6.4 COMMUNITY INITIATIVES AND INVOLVEMENT**

#### **6.4.1 Mount Pleasant Operation Community Consultative Committee**

MACH administers a CCC, with a membership comprised of an independent chair, as well as appropriate representation from MACH and the general community. The CCC is operated in general accordance with the *Community Consultative Committee Guidelines* (DP&E, 2016b) and is a requirement under Development Consent DA 92/97.

The CCC provides an opportunity for MACH to keep the local community informed about its activities and to seek community views and feedback.

CCC meetings are typically held quarterly and all minutes for the CCC meetings are made publicly available on MACH's website.

Project-specific consultation with the CCC is described in Section 6.3.6.

#### **6.4.2 Website**

MACH maintains a website (<https://machenergyaustralia.com.au/>) for the general public to keep up to date with MACH's activities and the status of the Project.

The website is a significant source of information, including:

- details on MACH and its assets;
- Project design, status and key documents (such as the Scoping Report);
- minutes of CCC meetings (Section 6.4.1);

<sup>1</sup> As at mid-2020, the full-time equivalent operational workforce of the Mount Pleasant Operation was approximately 440 people.

- recent media releases and contact details for media enquiries;
- environmental performance and environmental management plans;
- information regarding MACH's local labour and local procurement initiatives;
- information regarding MACH's community commitments;
- information regarding MACH's Stage 2 rail infrastructure construction activities;
- information regarding MACH's commitments relating to the ACDF (Section 6.4.4); and
- contact details for further information.

While the SIA community survey was being conducted (i.e. from 19 June to 31 August 2020), the online survey could be accessed from the MACH website.

#### **6.4.3 Community Contact Points**

MACH maintains a number of available points of contact for the community to ask specific questions or provide feedback, including:

- a 24/7 Community Hotline (1800 886 889);
- a Community Blasting Hotline (1800 931 872);
- a dedicated community call line for general enquiries (18 931 873);
- an email address ([info@machenergyaustralia.com.au](mailto:info@machenergyaustralia.com.au)); and
- a media contact point.

#### **6.4.4 Aboriginal Community Development Fund**

MACH oversees commitments relating to the ACDF. Representatives of MACH have formed part of the ACDF committee since the acquisition of the Mount Pleasant Operation. The ACDF was a community benefit specified in the Native Title Agreement made with the Wonnarua<sup>2</sup> People in 2005.

Established in 2006, the ACDF had a starting fund of \$500,000, which is indexed against Consumer Price Index (CPI) each year. The ACDF has invested more than \$4 million into projects that benefit the Upper Hunter Valley Aboriginal communities since its commencement in 2006.

The ACDF seeks to support partnerships that target issues, needs and opportunities which are priorities for local Aboriginal communities in areas such as health; economic development; cultural and community development and education.

Should the Project be approved, MACH would continue to contribute to Aboriginal community development through support for similar initiatives.

#### **6.4.5 Community Contributions, Programs and Sponsorships**

Over the last three years, MACH has provided donations, sponsorship or support to the following local community organisations, events and initiatives:

- ACDF;
- Thiess CARE Program;
- Aberdeen Care Package Cadets;
- Denman Public School;
- Muswellbrook Netball Association;
- Muswellbrook Junior Cricket Club;
- Lions Club;
- Lions Club Drought Appeal;
- Muswellbrook South Primary School Fete;
- Muswellbrook Santa Run;
- Hunter Young Business Mind Awards;
- Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce Business Awards;
- Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce;
- Coal Festival;

<sup>2</sup> It is understood that both "Wonnarua" and "Wanaruah" have been used to describe population groups in different contexts. The spelling variations can be attributed to oral histories and limited written documentation that identifies traditional population groups and sub-communities. The Wanaruah language group was reportedly the largest in the region pre-European settlement.

- Merriwa Show - Post Splitting Competition;
  - Muswellbrook Mens Shed;
  - PCYC Muswellbrook;
  - Riding for the Disabled;
  - Global Village Motorfest & Fair;
  - St Heliers Heavy Horse Field Day;
  - Rotary B&W Charity Ball;
  - Rotary Drought Assistance Charity Golf Day;
  - Burrumbuttock Hay Runners - Drought Appeal;
  - Apex;
  - NSW Women in Mining;
  - Farrams;
  - MBK Drought Appeal;
  - Westpac Rescue Helicopter Golf Day;
  - Westpac Rescue Helicopter;
  - Merriwa PAH&I Association;
  - Rotary Club of Muswellbrook;
  - Muswellbrook Retained Firefighters;
  - Muswellbrook High School;
  - Merriwa Junior Rugby League Football Club;
  - Merriwa Rugby League Football Club;
  - Cassilis Rodeo;
  - Upper Hunter Bull Riding Event 2019;
  - Merriwa Race Club;
  - Muswellbrook Amateur Theatrical Society Inc.;
  - Clean Up Australia Day 2019;
  - Australian Stock Horse Society;
  - Muswellbrook Polocrosse Club;
  - Scone Campdraft & Rodeo 2019;
  - Scone Photographic Prize;
  - Muswellbrook Cats AFC;
  - St James Primary School;
  - St Joseph's Merriwa P&F Association;
  - Mark Hughes Foundation via Fire Protection, Accidental First Aid, Safety, Training;
  - Merriwa River RFS;
  - Scone Rugby Club;
  - Upper Hunter Motoring Association;
  - Breast Cancer Awareness Month;
  - Aberdeen Public School P&C Association;
  - Wybong Rural Fire Brigade;
  - Muswellbrook NAIDOC Week;
  - Muswellbrook Cultural Spectacular;
  - Hunter Wayila Aboriginal Corporation;
  - Denman Pig Races;
  - Merriwa Interschool Horsesports Association;
  - Wildlife Aid Inc.;
  - Denman & District Cricket Club;
  - Upper Hunter Show Society;
  - Muswellbrook Public School;
  - Totems United Turtles RLFC;
  - St Johns Primary School Campdraft; and
  - Muswellbrook Olympic Park.
- During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, MACH has donated face masks to the local police and distributed hampers to the local community members to assist the community with dealing with the crisis.
- MACH would continue to provide funding contributions to local community programs and groups during the life of the Project.

#### **6.4.6 Local Contractors and Suppliers**

MACH's existing operations support a number of local and regional contractors and suppliers, such as:

- BlackRock Industries (land management services, Muswellbrook);
- Reliable Conveyor Belt Pty Ltd (total conveyor management services, Gunnedah);
- Bretts Maintenance and Welding Pty Ltd (welding, carpentry, trade and mechanical services in Muswellbrook);
- Think Solutions Cleaning and Support (cleaning and service solutions in Singleton); and
- Fast Fire Protection (fire protection products and services, Muswellbrook).

The approval of the Project would allow MACH to continue and expand support for local and regional contractors and suppliers. MACH would continue to implement its current Local Procurement Strategy, which gives preference to suppliers who demonstrate either local supply and/or local content.

#### **6.4.7 Public Reporting**

In accordance with Development Consent DA 92/97 for the Mount Pleasant Operation, MACH produces Annual Reviews to report on environmental performance and rehabilitation activities. Copies of previous Annual Reviews and monitoring results are available on MACH's website (Section 6.4.2).

It is anticipated that any Project Development Consent would contain similar requirements and MACH would continue to make monitoring and performance documentation publicly available.