

**Attendance**

**Chairperson**

Dr. W.E.J. Paradice (WP)

Independent Chair MPO CCC

**Community Representatives**

Tony Lonergan (TL)

Community Representative

**Muswellbrook Shire Council (MSC)**

Sharon Pope (SP)

Muswellbrook Shire Council

**Company Representatives**

Ngairé Baker (NB)

External Relations - Manager

Teena Keast (TK)

External Relations - Administration Support Officer

Mick Redman (MR)

General Manager - Operations

Chris Lauritzen (CL)

General Manager - Resource Development

Richard Ali (RA)

Land & Property Officer

Andrew Reid (AR)

Environmental Superintendent

**Thiess Representatives**

Peter York (PY)

Environment & Community Superintendent

**Apologies**

Trevor Parkinson

Community Representative

Llewellyn Bates

Community Representative

Jonathan Moore

Community Representative

Tim Troon

Community Representative

Sandy Lettice

Land & Property Officer

Theresa Folpp

Muswellbrook Shire Council

**Meeting Minutes**

Sarah Purser

1. **Welcome;** WP opened the Meeting at 10.05 a.m. welcoming all.

2. **Acknowledgement of Country;** Led by WP.

3. **Apologies**

Advised and recorded. NB noted that Tim Troon had hoped to attend today's Meeting.

Apology noted for TT due to being on duty at work.

4. **Declaration of Pecuniary Interest**

Standing Declaration; WP is remunerated by MACH Energy for Chairing the CCC Meetings, as is Sarah Purser for preparing the Meeting Minutes.

5. **Safety Share - Mick Redman**

In response to recent hand related injuries MPO has reinvigorated a focus on fundamental safety measures i.e. eyes on hands and ensuring the right tools for the job. MPO encourage all of their teams to actively involve themselves with the Safety Officer on site and advise of any work practices that they feel are not ideal.

6. **Minutes of the previous Meeting held 14 March 2024**

The Minutes from the previous meeting were accepted as a true record of the meeting and are available via the Documents Section on the Company website

<https://machenergyaustralia.com.au/community-consultative-committee/>

WP thanked MPO for their timely efforts in having the CCC section of the website updated as per the 2023 NSW Department of Planning CCC Guidelines.

## 7. Matters Arising from the previous Minutes

**Action Arising:** TF to send WP the MSC Resolution regarding Council representation at CCC Meetings.

✓ Completed by TF 5 April 2024

**At the February 2024 Ordinary Council meeting, MSC Council resolved the following;**

- A. *The Environmental Planning Officer being Council's representative at mine Community Consultative Committee meetings in accordance with the Community Consultative Committee (CCC) Guidelines (June 2023);*
- B. *The General Manager writing to the Minister for Planning, Housing, and Infrastructure (DPHI) seeking a change to the Guidelines, or the interpretation of the Guidelines, by DPHI staff, to enable more than one Council representative, composed of Councillors and Council staff, to be Council's representatives at CCC meetings; and*
- C. *Council to nominate the Councillor Representatives and the nominated Councillor to write to the relevant mines seeking to be accepted as Community Representatives at the relevant mine CCC.*

SP explained the value in having both Councillors and Council Staff attend the CCC Meetings to bring a broader level of knowledge to these forums e.g. for discussions around Voluntary Planning Agreements (VPA's). SP advised that post-Council Elections, Councillors will be selected as MSC CCC representatives. With reference to Point C, WP noted that the CCC's are State Government Committees, therefore it would be appropriate for MSC to write to each Chairperson, who will then make their recommendation to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI).

## 8. Chairs Report - Wej Paradise

WP led a general discussion about the value of uploading the MPO's Slide Presentation alongside the Meeting Minutes on the company website. WP felt this does add vibrancy and helps the community relate to what is discussed at these Meetings. MPO were concerned that the pictorial nature of the presentation would not have the right context if viewed on line, MPO provide a hard copy of the presentation to the CCC members and would prefer this information to be shared by CCC representatives via their in-person discussions with others in the community. MR indicated that the CCC Guidelines did not require the presentation to be uploaded to the company website.

There was a general discussion about potential off-site Meeting venues for 2024. Future onsite meetings will be determined when all CCC members are allowed onsite.

**ACTION 1:** WP to contact SP at MSC to ascertain suitability and availability of the Sustainability Hub as a potential CCC Meeting Venue. WP to discuss the Muswellbrook Workers Club with NG as the next preferred option.

WP asked that it be recorded that he will send condolences to Llewellyn Bates and Jonathan Moore on behalf of the MPO CCC.

## 9. Community & Muswellbrook Shire Council Feedback

### Sharon Pope - MSC

SP provided an update around regional roads in relation to traffic routes and movements for the transport of equipment for renewable energy projects e.g. blades and transformers for Wind Farms. SP confirmed that MSC have regular discussions with Transport NSW and the Energy Companies. SP outlined potential road works, detail around ownership, possible reclassification and how that would affect responsibilities for road maintenance.

SP said it was positive that Council's feedback is being heard e.g. around timing for road use to avoid impact to current users and contingencies to avoid snarls on local roads should there be a traffic incident. SP noted this is not just about Wind Farms, there needs to be consideration given to all potential future industry. SP confirmed the intent of the Energy Companies would be to talk to landowners and mines once they have a good understanding of the required upgrades.

TL queried if there is a designated access road from MPO that mine traffic has to use, he noted there is a lot of traffic coming along Kayuga Road. MR advised there are no restrictions for those living north that are using Kayuga Road. The restriction is in using the eastern end of Wybong Road i.e. travellers from Scone and Aberdeen. MR confirmed that has been taken into account in MPO's Traffic Assessment.

## 10. Mount Pleasant Operation Update - Mick Redman

The mining sequence continues with operations progressing west. MR noted the recent wet months with 50% above average rainfall. This has impacted on volumes albeit that MPO are still holding against their Calendar Year (CY) 2024 budget for total material and coal movement.

### **MPO have two big projects underway:-**

- 1) Mining Infrastructure Area (MIA) upgrade.
- 2) Coal Handling Preparation Plant (CHPP) incremental expansion project. MR was very happy with this project as it is being conducted with a high level of safety performance, along with cost and schedule compliance to date.

**HV Workshop;** MR showed the build progress, noting this will be a great facility for MPO's Maintenance Teams.

**Interim discharge pipeline works completed.** DW1 discharge detailed design effectively complete.

**Northern Link Road (Dorset Road).** Detailed design and Stakeholder consultation are ongoing. MPO are at approximately 30% of the design for the preferred route.

MPO provided pictorial detail of their preferred route for the Northern Link Road, it is anticipated there will be approximately 54 vehicle movements on that road every 24 hours and will tie in with the western end of Castlerock Road. There has been a great deal of communication with local residents and other stakeholders on the design progress. MPO would ideally commence the procurement process in Q3 2024, followed by financial approvals. MPO anticipate construction such that the Northern Link Road (Dorset Road) can be opened and Castlerock Road subsequently closed in the first half of 2026.

**ACTION 2:** In response to a query from TL, MPO to provide detail on proposed fencing for the Northern Link Road upon finalisation of design.

## 11. Applications and Approvals - Chris Lauritzen

### **Optimisation Project (SSD)**

#### **Key elements:-**

- Mine life to 2048.
- Mining to Edderton Seam floor.
- ROM coal production up to approx. 21 Mtpa.
- Product coal up to approx. 17 Mtpa.
- Consolidation of mining area.
- Single integrated waste rock emplacement.
- Some approved disturbance would be relinquished.

**MPO identified the existing mine elements. Additional/Revised project elements include:-**

- Approved disturbance area to be relinquished.
- Approximate additional disturbance of project extension.
- Northern Link Road Options 1 & 2 centrelines
- Approximate extent of Project open cut and waste rock emplacement landforms.
- Revised Infrastructure area envelope.

**The IPC granted NSW Development Consent under the EP&A Act on 6 September 2022**

- Development under SSD-10418 commenced on 12 February 2024.
- Under the new Development Consent MACH is required to develop and submit a range of new Environmental Management Plans and comply with various notification requirements. MACH is progressively working through these requirements.
- DPHI has approved the continuation of this CCC already established under DA 92/97 as the CCC for the Mount Pleasant Optimisation Project (SSD 10418).

**MACH also requires a further Commonwealth approval for the Project "Action" under the EPBC Act**

- The EPBC Act approval process was delayed by a consideration request lodged with the Federal Minister.
- The Federal Minister has now confirmed the original controlled action and processing of the referral has commenced.
- An environmental group has launched a judicial review challenging the Minister's decision. That judicial review confirmed the Minister's decision as did the subsequent appeal. The group has sought leave to appeal to the High Court. MPO now await to see if the High Court will hear this appeal.

**EIS Assessment Process;** CL detailed where the Optimisation Project is placed within each assessment phase.

**Modification 7 (MOD 7)**

**Consists of:-**

- an extension of the mine life by 6 years until the end of 2032, to provide operational certainty;
- an increase of the approved ROM coal extraction rate under DA 92/97 to 12 Mtpa from 2025 (due to some identified operational efficiencies);
- alternative alignment options for the approved Northern Link Road (NLR) that would be constructed prior to the approved closure of Castlerock Road; and
- Consultation with the community (Social Impact Assessment (SIA) and Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment (ACHA) processes) and regulatory agencies is continuing for the Modification.

**12.Land Management - Richard Ali**

**Priority Weed Management Programs**

RA noted that MPO manage large parcels of land around the mine itself, some of which are extensive agricultural parcels, along with offsets, and this is part of being compliant with regulations. MPO engage a number of Contractors for weed management and licensees also do a fair bit of work in that space. TL asked what the arrangement is for weed management on leased land and queried if MPO take responsibility. RA responded that within License Agreements there are some conditions around this. If, for example, there was a situation such as some St. John's Wort on mass, then MPO would pitch in.

RA provided a pictorial overview showing MPOs treatment and control of Blackberry and Box Thorn. RA confirmed that MPO had conducted Blackberry control up to the end of May due to the late frost in Cassilis. RA does not believe herbicide spraying is the most effective method for Box Thorn that is over two years old, therefore MPO are trialling mulching prior to spaying. TL advised that Round Up works well on the older plants at a ratio of 50/50 to water, however if just one branch is missed it will come back. TL noted there is often a spot where you can get under the bush with a chainsaw.

MPO have developed Weed Mapping and Weed Control Zones that can be provided to contractors to show where and what to adhere to in relation to weed control. MPO have invested a lot of time and effort into this mapping. RA noted that this is a passion of both SL and himself, and confirmed there is a high level of commitment to staying on top of weed control. RA noted that MPO do rely on Council and Community to advise of any weed concerns. RA asked that the CCC encourage this feedback as it assists to ensure areas are not missed.

**Weed Mapping at Wahrane - Drone Surveys 2023 - 2024;** RA provided an example from one of MPO's offsets which showed the drone work and ground mapping that has been undertaken. RA identified where Blackberry, Sweet Briar and St. John's Wort had been pin pointed on this weed mapping, adding that SL, RA and Contractors can put a dot down when they see a particular weed via the use of tablets.

**Weed Control Zones at Wahrane;** RA identified the control zone for St. John's Wort and Sweet Briar via hatching on mapping. RA explained from this Mapping MPO can then allocate where priorities are and direct their resources to those areas. RA noted that MPO also provide these maps to the Upper Hunter Weed Authority so they are aware of MPO's undertakings.

**Priority Vertebrate Pest Management Programs;** RA provided an overview of the outcomes of MPO's feral pig and fox programs. These are conducted for the protection of agricultural industry on MPO's land, as a duty of care for neighbours, and for biodiversity outcomes i.e. to protect species. RA noted it had been positive to find the presence of Squirrel Gliders as they are a vulnerable species. RA noted MPO have a pen system for pig trapping that can be closed remotely by mobile phone. SP and TL queried if feed incentives are placed to encourage the pigs and RA responded a variety of enticements are utilised to attract the pigs.

**Projects and Infrastructure;** RA noted that MACH lease out their buffer land, this is used by the licensees for a large range of activities such as; cattle grazing, dairying, fodder and hay production, turf farms and the equine industry. Given the rental crisis in Scone and Muswellbrook, MPO seek to ensure their houses are rented and conduct continual mitigation and renovations. MPO have a fencing program underway, where rural style fences are installed to provide visual appeal and allow for cattle to be strategically grazed and rotated. Livestock water systems are being replaced.

### 13.Environmental Performance - Andrew Reid

#### Compliance Monitoring - Andrew Reid

- There has been an above average rainfall for the period June 2023 to May 2024.
- The blast events for the QTR have all been compliant with regulatory standards.
- Environment Protection Authority (EPA) notification of two anonymous complaints relating to blast fume at 14:54 on 13-Jun-24 have been investigated by MPO and confirmed compliant in terms of permission, MPO will provide that information to the DPIE and EPA.
- The EPA conducted an unannounced audit of the Mount Pleasant Environmental Management System and Annual Return 2023, the feedback at the end of the day was very positive from the EPA. MPO can provide a update on the EPA report should that fall into the next CCC meeting time frame.
- Completion of Revegetation Targeted Assessment Program (TAP) audit and site inspection by the NSW Resource Regulators.
- 19 credits were secured in the May 2024 Hunter River Salinity Trading Scheme (HRSTS) auction. AR noted that this is a very well managed system and MPO are yet to discharge.
- The Warrawee Native Plant Nursery located on Castlerock Road is operational. AR provided pictures of the igloo style coverage and MR noted that seed collection is from on site for replacing natives on MPO's property.
- Visual Tree Screen planting is underway for Autumn 2024. AR noted that survival rates have improved.
- Continuing the review/consultation and update of all State Significant Development (SSD) management plans following commencement of SSD10418.

**Rare Brown Falcon Dark Morph photographed at a sediment dam on the MPO rehabilitated area.** SP noted that MSC Councillors and Staff went to MPO and that falcon had followed them around. They had observed that one and a grey one.

**Trial of biodegradable tree guards.** SP noted these had been seen during a site visit to MPO and felt they looked good.

### **Rehabilitation Targets**

MPO have a large focus on rehabilitation and are on track to hit their target of 150 hectares for this year. AR noted that rehabilitation gets the same attention in relation to weed and pest control and acknowledged SL and RA for also being across this. SP asked if there is any intention to do any burns given there is so much grass after the rain. AR confirmed that MPO are looking to conduct hazard reduction burning on areas of their lease when practical.

## **14.External Relations - Ngaire Baker**

### **Stakeholder Engagement - Sponsorship & Community**

MPO have undertaken ongoing stakeholder engagement with local neighbours and businesses. MR noted that these discussions had included matters that neighbours had brought up these CCC Meetings. In addition there was a variety of questions relating to Sponsorship and a general interest in what was happening at MPO. Of note is that jobs are of great interest at the moment, with discussions around employment and local people

- ✓ MPO published their first Community & Employee Newsletter for 2024, another Newsletter is anticipated for July.
- ✓ Mick Redman, General Manager Operations, presented an update on the MPO at the Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce Meeting in May. MR noted this had been well received and had covered the Continuation Project.
- ✓ MACH Energy participated in the NSW Mining Careers Expo in Singleton & Newcastle. This had been well supported by parents, teachers/educators and students with a number of questions raised on how to get into mining, particularly through apprenticeships.
- ✓ MPO attended the opening of the Blackroo Community Haven, a community venture supported by MPO's Aboriginal Community Development Fund (ACDF). NB advised the Haven is located in the old Fire Station and is a great project that was developed by De-anne Douglas and the Blackroo Team. Blackroo now also have suitable sheds to store household items and clothing that have been donated for families in need and are able to deliver these via a furniture trailer secured via another Grant.
- ✓ MPO sponsored and participated in the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Golf Day, Muswellbrook.

### **Sponsorships**

NB noted MPO's sponsorships had covered a diverse range of activities from sporting through to local events.

- ✓ Muswellbrook & Scone Rugby Union Clubs.
- ✓ 2024 Sandy Hollow Charity Motorfest 2024 Aberdeen Campdraft.
- ✓ Aberdeen Bushman's Campdraft & Roughrider Association.
- ✓ Merriwa Festival of the Fleeces.
- ✓ Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce & Industry – Business Awards.
- ✓ Merriwa Pony Club.
- ✓ Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service – Rescue Ball.
- ✓ Merriwa, Muswellbrook, Bunnan Polocrosse Club.
- ✓ Cassilis Public School.
- ✓ Aspect Autism Spectrum Australia–School Horse Riding Program.
- ✓ Hunter Branch Australian Stock Horse Society.
- ✓ “Muscle in the Brook”

### **Complaints per Month By Type and Number of Complaints per Complainant (March, April, May 2024)**

There had been 11 complaints during this reporting period. NB provided an overview of the nature of these complaints. NB noted that there were not a diverse range of people raising concerns from the Muswellbrook area, but rather centralised across three complainants. MR provided an example of MPO responding to a lighting concern that had been from an Aberdeen location. NB noted that particular lighting one had been very high up and the complainant had been pleased that MPO had been to visit him to rectify the issue.

### **15. General Business**

Nil put forward.

### **16. Next Meeting Dates - Locations to be confirmed**

19 September 2024

12 December 2024

WP closed the meeting at 11.35 a.m. thanking all for their attendance. MPO welcomed all to stay on for the lunch and refreshments they had provided for the CCC Meeting attendees.

### **Actions Arising from this Meeting**

**ACTION 1:** WP to contact SP at MSC to ascertain suitability and availability of the Sustainability Hub as a potential CCC Meeting Venue. WP to discuss the Muswellbrook Workers Club with NB as the next preferred option.

**ACTION 2:** In response to a query from TL, MPO to provide detail on proposed fencing for the Northern Link Road upon finalisation of design.