

**Attendance**

**Chairperson**

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

Independent Chair

**Community Representatives**

Tony Lonergan (TL)

Community Representative

Trevor Parkinson (TP)

Community Representative

Jonathan Moore (JM)

Community Representative

**Muswellbrook Shire Council (MSC)**

De-Anne Douglas (DD)

Deputy Mayor & Councillor

Theresa Folpp (TF)

Environmental Planning Officer

**Company Representatives**

Mick Redman (MR)

General Manager - Operations

Chris Lauritzen (CL)

General Manager - Resource Development

Andrew Reid (AR)

Environmental Superintendent

Ngairé Baker (NB)

External Relations - Manager

Richard Ali (RA)

Land & Property Officer

**Thiess Representatives**

Peter York (PY)

Environment & Community Superintendent

Brodie Morrison (BM)

Environmental Advisor

**Apologies**

Llewellyn Bates

Community Representative

**Meeting Minutes**

Sarah Purser

**1. Welcome**

WP opened the meeting at 11.10 a.m. on members return from a Site Tour of the Pit and Tailings Storage Facility. NB provided members with a hard copy of today's MACH CCC presentation and the finalised Minutes for the previous Meeting held on 19 September 2024.

WP introduced DD as being in attendance as the Muswellbrook Shire Council (MSC) Councillor Representative. WP acknowledged DD's appointment as MSC Deputy Mayor and DD's involvement with the Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Lands Council (LALC). WP queried if MSC had formalised their Councillor Representatives for the regional CCC's. DD responded that is correct and MSC will confirm DD's alternate for the MACH CCC.

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

**3. Apologies;** Advised and recorded.

**4. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest;** Standing Declaration; WP is remunerated by MACH for Chairing the CCC Meetings, as is Sarah Purser for preparing the Meeting Minutes.

**5. Safety Share - Mick Redman;** With the approach to the Christmas holiday season MR encouraged all to drive carefully and safely. MACH communicate this message to their employees on a regular basis and MR asked that this also be shared with members families and contacts.

**6. Minutes of the previous Meeting held 19 September 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/>

## **7. Matters Arising from the previous Minutes**

WP acknowledged that the CCC had been taken to view the proposed location for the Northern Link Road (NLR) in conjunction with a visit to the Warrawee Nursery to view MACH's Biomass Trial on 1 October 2024. WP said this tour had been very beneficial to members.

## **8. Chairs Report - Wej Paradise**

WP confirmed that Jack Turner, Senior Environmental Assessment Officer for Resource Assessments at the DPHI is now the first point of contact for both the MACH CCC and MACH Operations.

WP advised that he had received a letter of resignation from Community Representative Tim Troon (TT) due to work commitments. NB acknowledged TT for his long association and contribution to the MACH CCC, noting TT had been in touch with MR as well.

WP read detail of TT's resignation noting that TT had been very positive and complimentary about Mt Pleasant and the work MACH has done within the Muswellbrook Community. TT had been proud to contribute to this committee and expressed gratitude for the opportunity to participate.

NB offered to draft a response to Tim Troon on behalf of the MACH CCC.

## **9. Community Feedback**

TL asked if Dartbrook had been putting out poles on MACH's land and MR responded that MACH are conducting that work as part of setting up an offset on that property. MR confirmed that MACH do own that land and Dartbrook have a mining lease underneath, therefore there is a lot of mutual collaboration between the two companies.

TL queried MACH's proposed archaeological works and AR responded he would provide an update in the Environmental Performance Report at today's meeting. TL noted that a number of years back some people had come looking for the site of the School as an ancestor had been a Teacher. TL noted there had been a diary containing some history of the School and MACH responded they would be most interested to see this if TL may be able to track this down.

JM was hoping that some slashing could be done from MACH's entrance on Wybong Road towards the intersection of Bengalla Road. MR confirmed that MACH had undertaken that slashing in the past and will look into that program. JM was appreciative as the approach of summer tends to raise bushfire concerns and commended MACH on how well they maintain their site entrance.

DD advised this is her second term as a MSC Councillor. DD undertakes this role as she is passionate about this community. DD recognised the importance of the CCC Meetings noting these forums provide an opportunity for MSC to talk with community and receive information from the mining companies that Council can then share back to residents when MSC receive enquiries.

DD also sits on many other CCC's as a Stakeholder Representative for the Wanaruah LALC. DD acknowledged TF's valuable contributions to the regional CCC's.

DD expressed gratitude to MACH for their assistance in wrapping presents as part of the Christmas Toy Appeal. DD thanked MACH for the time and effort their team had put in, noting that the people driving these Appeals could not do what they do without that type of support.

## Update from Muswellbrook Shire Council

DD advised that MSC Councillors and Staff had worked very hard and been successful in having Muswellbrook declared a disaster zone following on from the earthquake activities. DD hopes this will strengthen insurance cases for the community going forward.

## 10.Applications and Approvals - Chris Lauritzen

### Mt Pleasant Optimisation Project (SSD 10418)

As presented at previous MACH CCC Meetings

Under this new Development Consent MACH is required to develop and submit a range of new Environmental Management Plans and comply with various notification requirements. MACH will be working through these requirements progressively in the coming months.

MACH has received the Commonwealth approval for the Project "Action" under the EPBC Act. Modification 7 (MOD 7) has been withdrawn. CL provided an update on the EIS Assessment Process for the Optimisation Project.

Prior to departing the meeting CL wished the CCC all the best for Christmas and the New Year and stated he was looking forward to seeing members again in 2025.

## 11.Environmental Performance - Andrew Reid

### Compliance Monitoring

- Rainfall for the months of October and November was below the long term average. AR noted that there had been discussions around rainfall and interest in cumulative data at a previous CCC meeting and therefore provided a graph of the Historical Average over 120 years. AR advised this data shows that rainfall was slightly below the long term average, however this is trending up a bit.
- All State Significant Development (SSD) Management Plans required for construction of the Northern Link Road and enabling production to exceed 10.5 Mt per annum have been approved by the DPHI. AR acknowledged the consultative process with the CCC and beyond in relation to these Management Plans and thanked members for their feedback. Approved Management Plans are uploaded to MACH's website; <https://machenergyaustralia.com.au/mount-pleasant/documentation/>  
The Environmental Protection Licence (EPL) has been updated to reflect these changes.
- The NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) conducted an unannounced site inspection as part of the annual "Bust the Dust" campaign on 23 October 2024. MACH took the EPA representatives out to the Pit, around to Despatch and showed the EPA their dust control systems and processes in terms of managing air emissions. The EPA were satisfied with these and MACH confirmed they are happy to support the EPA with these types of initiatives. TF queried if the EPA visit mine sites in the mornings as observations of dust differ from early in the day when it is cooler compared to later in the afternoon. MR confirmed that EPA inspections occur at a whole range of times and TF was pleased to know this.
- MPO reported a non-compliance to the DPHI involving a 0.05 hectare incursion/clearing by the Mining Services Contractor. The ecological and/or biodiversity impacts were negligible. MACH provided an overview on what had occurred and detailed the high level of checks and measures they have in place in relation to their Ground Disturbance Permit (GDP). In response to this incident MACH have corrective actions in place and implemented initiatives such as GPS capability for Supervisors that identify a GDP area.

- A Historic Heritage Archaeological Survey is underway at Kayuga School. This program will extend into 2025 to include the homestead wells, surrounding areas, and the Kayuga mine north of Castlerock Road. MACH confirmed there has been a lot of pictures taken over the past ten years and a great deal of history has already been gathered. MACH confirmed they could make the Heritage Report available to members if that was of interest.
- Salvage of Aboriginal artefacts along the proposed Northern Link Road corridor has been completed, with more salvage planned for 2025.
- Another seismic assessment of all dams had been conducted following minor earthquakes in November 2024 and there was no observable change in their condition. MACH confirmed that there are numerous, high frequency inspections conducted on dams. MACH also have monitoring on tailings via satellite and this is for live data in terms of stability and part of MACH's Dam Management Systems.
- The Independent Environmental Audit (IEA) site inspection and interviews were completed in November 2024. There were no major non-compliances identified and the final report will be made publically available in 2025.

MACH advised they were in the process of updating their Bushfire Management Plan and had the RFS out doing inspections as well. WP queried if MACH conduct any traditional burns, it was his understanding that the intent of these is to reduce vegetation capacity. MACH confirmed they had done this in the past and will continue discussions with various providers to consider traditional burns as a future possibility.

MR advised that AR will be leaving MACH at the end of 2024, MR acknowledged that during AR's 6 year tenure he had seen the development of not just the mine, but also the systems that support the mine. MR acknowledged and thanked AR for his contributions to MACH. WP joined MR in thanking AR for all of his efforts in relation to the MACH CCC.

## **12. Mount Pleasant Operation Update - Mick Redman**

The mining sequence continues with operations progressing west. Calendar Year (CY) 24 budget volumes are less than CY23 volumes. Forecast for '24 TMM is 46.3 million bulk cubic metres (Mbcm). MACH operations remain in a steady state with no big increases in the short term. MR identified the high energy coal areas for November and December 2024. MR noted that these are in the southern area of the Pit and had been discussed with the CCC during today's Site Tour.

MR had spoken at previous CCC Meetings regarding two large projects for 2024 being the Coal Handling Preparation Plant (CHPP) upgrade project and new Workshop. MR was very pleased with how both these projects had come together. MR advised the construction and commissioning phase of the new Workshop had resulted in an excellent standard of build. MACH now have a state of the art facility for their Maintenance Teams which will lead to a lot of efficiencies. The official opening event for the new Workshop was scheduled for 17 December 2024.

MACH have completed a life of mine (LOM) office extension and received the occupation certificate in early December 2024. This facility will assist MACH to expand the mining production as it provides the necessary space for those project personnel. MR confirmed that Thies has moved in and are very pleased with their new facility.

MACH were working on the final stages of the Feasibility Study to determine all the aspects associated with ramping up their ROM million tonnes per annum (MTPA) from the current 11.5 to the ultimate 21. TF noted that a lot of mines in the Shire are approved for 21 but do not get to that volume, TF queried if MACH will reach that tonnage. MACH responded that the Feasibility Study indicates that mining will get to the 21 and MACH are currently examining that pathway. MACH has a low life of mine strip ratio compared to other mines with higher strip ratios.

MACH provided an external and internal pictorial overview of the new Workshop and described the facilities in place for servicing all types of equipment. As production volumes increase over time this Workshop will grow. TL queried temperatures in the Workshop and MR responded that it is 26 metres high with ventilation at the top. During winter and summer MACH will have cooling and heating measures in place.

As presented at previous CCC Meetings MACH provided an update on the following suite of projects:-

- ✓ Northern Link Road (NLR)
- ✓ Discharge Water Dam (DW 1)
- ✓ Northern Surface Water Infrastructure (NSWI)

MACH noted there had been great support from suppliers in response to Works Tenders. There is in the order of \$180Million associated with the full scope of these works and dependent on all going well the plan is to have boots on the ground around mid to late February 2025. TP said this was great to see for the Muswellbrook Shire and District.

MR noted that there are currently around 570 employees on site, at full production this will likely increase to approximately 900. This will provide additional jobs for the area and these staffing levels do not account for peak construction periods. TP commended MACH for their great vision and hopes this will be successful and keep Muswellbrook on the map. MR responded that it was good to be involved in a growth project.

TL asked where staff will come from and if MACH are able to provide a breakdown of numbers for Muswellbrook and Singleton. MACH responded that 70% of staff live in the Local Government Area (LGA), predominantly; Muswellbrook, Singleton, Merriwa and the Upper Hunter Shire. There are some numbers in the Cessnock area postcodes, however given the commute to Muswellbrook is frowned upon they will typically rent a place with workmates, come to the area, stay for a swing, and return.

MACH are advocating for liveability in the local area and to support this have launched MACH Energy Mount Pleasant Operation Rural Community Scholarships. There are four Scholarships available per year through the University of Newcastle. The Scholarships in Health and Education will provide career pathways in much needed services within the community. Scholarships in Engineering support career pathways within the local mining industry.

MACH would ideally like to sponsor people from the LGA that will then go on to apply their trade in this area i.e. as a medical professional. DD acknowledged if more specialised services were available at Muswellbrook Hospital this would most likely contribute to retaining the local community and having past residents return to the township.

DD commended MACH for their engagement of locals, DD had received feedback from a business that had been incredibly impressed by the number of contractors/suppliers in the area that also engage local people, noting that goes over and above MACH's numbers. From Council's perspective DD agreed with the importance of liveability and there is the need for enough housing to expand. DD noted there is a lot of new housing going in but this does take time.

### **13.Land Management - Richard Ali**

#### **Priority Weed Management Programs**

**St John's Wort;** RA noted that in 2023 MACH had nearly eradicated St John's Wort however this has returned in large numbers. Discussions with the Upper Hunter Weeds Authority indicate that wildlife are potentially playing a big role in transporting this. RA advised that MACH had brought in contractors from out West who worked side by side with Thiess at the Mount Pleasant site as a response to weed management.

**African Boxthorn;** From research and learned efficiencies, RA noted the best way to control African Boxthorn is via a combination of machinery and spraying. RA showed the CCC a piece of machinery that had been constructed that is able to deliver the herbicide spray whilst mulching. This machinery has been field tested and proven to be able to get into challenging areas.

**Priority Vertebrate Pest Management Programs;** RA provided an overview of MACH's fox control program. RA confirmed that feral pig monitoring continues on site and JM noted that pigs are currently a bit of a problem. RA provided the results of the Offsets 2024 Hunter Local Lands Services Aerial Program.

With regard to feral pest management TF queried if removing their food source or bringing in a predator may work as a control measure. RA acknowledged TF's feedback noting exploration into alternative control measures is challenging as some food sources are for both the feral animals and the natives that MACH are working to protect. MACH do use fencing as a control measure, however some species such as feral cats are athletic so consideration of alternative control measures is an ongoing process.

**Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) 2024 Surveys;** During this survey year, Namoi BMA had the majority of threatened species observations and the largest number of species overall, with 76 species recorded at Namoi compared to 62 at Merriwa West and 63 at Merriwa East. Of the species recorded, seven are listed as threatened under the NSW BC Act, one is listed as threatened under the EPBC Act and one is listed as migratory under the EPBC Act. RA was pleased to report that MACH had recorded quite a lot of significant species. RA said this was a really good outcome given this shows that improvements to habitats in those offsets are drawing in these species.

**Land Management;** MACH are setting up some more offsets via the Biodiversity Conservation arm of the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW). The DCCEEW were able to see that regeneration and cattle grazing were successfully coexisting in Merriwa and Cassilis offset spaces.

**Projects and Infrastructure;** Housing renovations continuing at Glenwood house - Yarrawonga Road Cassilis. New Livestock yards were installed at Overdeen. As part of MACH's Fencing Programs 4.2 kilometres of Merriwa East BSA boundary fences were replaced due to their age and condition. RA noted that MACH are installing timber fencing to provide a rural aesthetic.

## 14. External Relations - Ngaire Baker

### Stakeholder Engagement - Sponsorship & Community

- ✓ Ongoing stakeholder engagement with local neighbours and businesses including residents of Kayuga, Aberdeen and Blairmore Lane.
- ✓ The General Manager Operations and team members attended Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce meetings.
- ✓ Attended and sponsored the Merriwa Springtime Show.
- ✓ CCC Visit to Warrawee Nursery & Biomass coppicing.
- ✓ Attended St. Heliers Correctional Centre NAIDOC Day Celebration.
- ✓ Attended and presented trophies at the Merriwa Junior Rugby League Presentation Day.
- ✓ Attended and Sponsored the Cassilis Springtime Ball.
- ✓ Members of the MACH Energy Team attended the NSW Mining Annual Parliamentary Dinner.
- ✓ Attended the Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue Forum, Singleton.
- ✓ Hosted the final Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue School Tour for 2024 - Aberdeen Public School.
- ✓ Attended Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce & Industry AGM.
- ✓ Attended the St Heliers Correctional Centre Work Release Community Engagement Event.
- ✓ Attended Muswellbrook High School Business Breakfast.
- ✓ MACH Energy and Thiess hosted an International Men's Day site recognition.
- ✓ The MACH Energy team sponsored and attended several school presentation days throughout December.

### **Recent Sponsorships**

- ✓ Aberdeen Rugby League
- ✓ Belltrees Bushrangers Cricket Club
- ✓ Denman Swimming Club
- ✓ MCCI Great Cattle Dog Muster 2025
- ✓ Merriwa Festival of the Fleeces 2025
- ✓ Muswellbrook Heelers Rugby Union Football Club
- ✓ Muswellbrook Rams Senior Rugby League
- ✓ Singleton Strikers Soccer Club

NB advised that there had been many more sponsorships over and above the recent ones presented at today's meeting. Over the course of 2024 MACH's sponsorships equated to a spend in excess of \$300,000.00 via a large number of smaller rounds. NB noted that the more recent requests to MACH for sponsoring competitions were a good indicator of what is happening in the town from a sporting perspective, inclusive of equestrian events.

NB noted that MACH had mailed out their December Newsletter and had hard copies in hand for members at today's meeting. MACH's Newsletters are also available to view on the company website.

### **Complaints per Month By Type and Number of Complaints per Complainant (September, October, November 2024)**

NB provided an overview of the nature of complaints received during this reporting period, there were no complaints received in November 2024. JM queried if noise is being picked up by monitoring or is it people complaining. MACH responded that in response to one resident expressing noise concerns, the company have had a barn owl in that location for three to four months for noise monitoring purposes. DD asked if MACH receive complaints where the cause is from another mine and the complainant may not be calling the right mine. NB acknowledged from a cumulative perspective it can be people's perception of what is happening and confirmed that MACH's monitoring is very effective.

## **15. General Business**

WP thanked members for their participation and commitment throughout the year and wished everyone the best for the Christmas Season. WP noted that the MACH CCC Meetings over this year had been very positive. WP will engage with NB regarding recruiting new community / stakeholder representatives in 2025.

MR wished all a Merry Christmas, a happy and safe New Year period, and stated he had enjoyed the interactions with the CCC over the course of this year.

WP closed the meeting at 12.50 p.m. and confirmed the proposed MACH CCC Meeting dates for 2025.

## **16. Proposed Meeting Dates commencing at 10.00 a.m.**

- ✓ 13 March 2025
- ✓ 19 June 2025
- ✓ 18 September 2025
- ✓ 11 December 2025