

5. Correspondence

- 6/12/17 – Email from MidCoast Council advising that Cr Claire Pontin will be its delegate on this CCC. This information was forwarded on to members.
- 18/12/17 – Email to members with the link to the PAC's determination & subsequent media release from GRL.
- 19/12/17 – Email to members with the draft minutes from the 1st December 2017 meeting.
- 15/1/18 – Email to members with the final draft minutes from the December meeting.
- 22/1/18 - Email Meeting Notice and Agenda for this meeting
- 29/1/18 – Email from Bob Corbett with the dust monitoring information, which was forwarded through the members
- 31/1/18 – Email from Jaime Flynn from the Department advising that she is an apology for this meeting and informing me that Emma Prince will be in attendance.

Correspondence accepted:

Moved: LA

Seconded: TS

6. Project Update RC provided update as follows:

GRL

Exploration - No field exploration activities over the Christmas period. Work continued with the geologist preparing documentation for required to seek the sign off on rehabilitation of historical exploration sites, including discussions with relevant landowners. There were no reports submitted or required.

Land management - Routine activities continued. Some of trees within screen plantings previously noted as looking unwell appear to have picked up and are looking better, possibly due in part to reduced moisture stress and the exodus of the Christmas beetle infestation.

Air Quality Monitoring - RC raised the subject of the dust monitoring results and asked the meeting for any questions. SR made comment on the range of the results. RC commented that the results in any month between individual sites vary depending on the nature of the activities being undertaken in adjacent areas, e.g. ploughing, with intermonth variations due to things such as bushfires and weather conditions. However results remain consistent with those recorded since the commencement of monitoring in 2010/11.

RC noted that there is no data for the southern TEOM for the past few months: a technical issue has been found and a replacement unit will be available in the next few weeks.

**7. General
Business**

7.1

BC provided the meeting with an update on the Rocky Hill Project.

BC stated that on 14 December 2017, the PAC determined to refuse the development application for the Project. The PAC and DPE held the position that the project satisfied all non-discretionary criteria and that it was only for discretionary reasons that the project was not supported. GRL remains committed to the project and will continue to pursue all available options in an attempt to have the project approved and has commenced merit appeal proceedings in the Land and Environment Court and believes that the project could and should be approved with conditions.

RD questioned BC as to whether there will be further action should approval be denied at this point. BC explained that for this application, yes, it would be the final attempt. RC indicated that legally there is further re-course, but it is rarely taken up.

RD stated that it was going to be an interesting case due to the close proximity to town and there being no precedent to compare. RC noted that there are many mines close to towns – much bigger mines and much bigger towns. RC also cited a recent example where Singleton Council had approved a residential development to 400 m of the Bloomfield Colliery.

SR raised the issue of the length of time GRL's Exploration Licenses have been active for. RC reminded the meeting that the Rocky Hill project is within a section of EL6523, only one of the ELs that GRL holds and that the section of EL 6523 (north Waukivory Road) is to be relinquished. RC also advised that some exploration works have been carried out in some areas of 6524 and 6563 area and further work is to be carried out in other areas, RC also explained that exploration activities need to be staged with information from each stage evaluated and then used to determine if and where further work is warranted, It takes a long time to carry out sufficient exploration to determine if an area contains an resource warranting development.

SR criticized the government but noted that the company is only doing what it is allowed to.

The question then arose as to whether an area, once relinquished by one company, could be taken up by someone else. EP explained the current process for obtaining an area for coal exploration, i.e. if an EL is relinquished it is not easy for others to pick it up – it is a competitive process. BC stated that GRL have relinquished 2 areas and sought EP's opinion as to whether they could be picked up by anyone else. EP advised that it would be unlikely

TS wanted to know to what depth the Rocky Hill pits would be. RC confirmed that the maximum depth identified in the EIS was 220m, noting that of the 3 pits proposed only 1 will actually be mined to 220 m. The potential for underground mining was also raised. RC noted that underground mining is not feasible due to the dip of the coal seams (45 degrees plus) and the depth at which the coal seams flatten out – coal mining is generally not feasible at depths greater than 400 – 500 m. .

BW asked what GRL plans to do with their land holdings if the appeal to the L&E Court is lost, BC indicated that this would be a Board decision and that there is currently no answer. Selling could be an option, but he could not say definitively and there is no timeframe for a decision. BW expressed concern about some of the country that belongs to AGL and the poor state this country is in. He stated that it would be a shame for GRL country to look the same. BC replied by stating that regardless of the decision, GRL country will not go backwards and that GRL is commitment to co-existence and ensuring properties are managed and improved. .

RD expressed concern over the presence of Giant Parramatta Grass on some GRL properties observed in the past. RC advised that Speldon has a program to eradicate GPG on the land it leases. BC and RC requested RD to provide a list of properties that he believed required a GPG program so that they could investigate the issue and if required, ensure appropriate action is taken to rectify the situation, either by itself or the tenant.

EP clarified for members the difference between the Department of Planning and Environment that assesses major projects under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* – Minister for Planning, and the Department of Planning and Environment’s Division of Resources and Geoscience that administers exploration licences under the *Mining Act 1992* – Minister for Resources. Exploration is a lengthy process and if areas of ELs are identified as not being viable for mining these areas should be considered being dropped. Although the Rocky Hill Coal Project was refused, this does not affect the ELs, which can be retained if exploration is continuing.

The Government has introduced two new frameworks for the release of coal areas – the Strategic Release Framework and the Operational Allocation Framework. If areas were dropped, they could only be picked up if the area was released as a Strategic Release area (tender process), or as an Operational Allocation (addition to an existing exploration licence or mining lease).

BC stated that GRL have relinquished 2 areas and wanted confirmation that these could not be picked up by anyone else. EP confirmed these areas could only be picked up if they were part of a Strategic Release area, or as an Operational Allocation.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.50am with the chair thanking CCC members for their contribution.

NEXT MEETING: 6th April 2018

Next Meeting

Discussions about holding the next meeting at the Maslen property ensued. It was agreed to incorporate a site inspection followed by the CCC meeting. To be confirmed.

ACTION ITEM

Next meeting – venue and commencement time to be confirmed (RC & LA)