

Stratford Community Consultative Committee (CCC) – 2023 Annual Report

CCC project name:	Stratford Coal Mining Complex	Reporting period:	January 1 to December 31 2023
Independent chairperson:	Margaret MacDonald-Hill	Proponent contact:	Tom Kirkwood, Environment and Community Superintendent

1. Executive summary / introduction

The Stratford Community Consultative Committee began in 1995 as part of the consent of the Stratford Coal Mine Development. Following the approval of the Stratford Extension Project in 2015, the committee’s role was expanded to cover the Stratford Mining Complex operations of 1,500 hectares situated east of The Bucketts Way between the villages of Stratford and Craven, within the MidCoast Council Local Government Area.

The committee is comprised of:

- Five local community representatives;
- Two MidCoast representatives; one elected councillor and one staff member with a designated councillor alternate;
- Two Stratford Coal representatives with attendance from other personnel as required;
- One independent Chairperson.

2. CCC activities over last 12 months:

- The committee met four times during the reporting period in February, May, August and November and discussed general environmental management and monitoring, operational activities, land management and rehabilitation activities, the upcoming triennial Independent Audit, company reports and community sponsorship and revised DPE CCC guidelines and requirements.

Planning for mine closure and the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment is well progressed, in tandem with broader community engagement sessions, a new dedicated webpage, appointment of specialist staff to assist and investigation into a potential transition to a renewable energy hub with feasibility studies currently underway and future land use opportunities are a major focus of the committee’s long standing members and residents.

- Attendance at meetings is consistently high with a very occasional apology from members of this dedicated group. The committee has regular attendance from guest speakers.
- Meetings are held on site and the May meeting included a tour of the Cabbage Gum Floodplain Open Forest planting area and the Stratford Rehabilitation lookout.
- The committee meetings are informative and responsive to the members’ needs. This committee has existed for almost three decades with original members who are all well informed, respected and known within the area. The collective knowledge base is quite

high and Stratford Coal enjoy an ongoing, good rapport amongst the members, the community and the MidCoast Council beyond the structured meeting schedule. 2023 was another year without any community complaints and vindicates the committee as a clear example of what can be achieved by effective community engagement. It fulfils its purpose under the current Departmental guidelines. All committee members have signed the revised Code of Conduct and Declarations of Interest documents and adopted a Terms of Reference as required by the Department.

3. Key issues

Issue	Actions taken	Next steps
Mine Closure Planning	<p>Consultation with CCC on Socio-economic Impact Assessment – presentation of findings.</p> <p>Dedicated webpage created for mine closure.</p>	<p>Information will support preparation of detailed mine closure planning and guide future consultation with all key stakeholders.</p> <p>Appointment of specialist staff to assist with ongoing community liaison.</p>
Rehabilitation Progress	<p>Agenda item to each meeting. Included on November fact sheet and dedicated webpage.</p>	<p>Updates at quarterly meetings and as required.</p>
MidCoast Council Annual Financial Report on Community Enhancement Funding	<p>Comprehensive Report provided by Council to CCC.</p> <p>(Resolution of Council to allocate 50% of contributions received from Stratford to the Education Fund & 25% of annual contributions for next two years to upgrade facilities within the Stratford area in consultation with committee</p>	<p>Ongoing annual action.</p>

CCC input into allocation of Stratford Community Infrastructure funds	Improvements to park identified and actions implemented.	CCC will be consulted in the distribution of 25% future funding allocation.
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4. Focus for next 12 months:

- Continued comprehensive reporting on all company operations, including monitoring and environmental performance, any community complaints/ responses.
- Progress on rehabilitation.
- Progress on mine closure planning and emerging options.

Name of chairperson:	Margaret MacDonald-Hill
Date:	January 18 2024