

## Stratford Community Consultative Committee (CCC) – 2024 Annual Report

CCC project name:	<b>Stratford Coal Mining Complex</b>	Reporting period:	<b>January 1 to December 31 2024</b>
Independent chairperson:	<b>Margaret MacDonald-Hill</b>	Proponent contact:	<b>Tom Kirkwood, Environment and Community Superintendent</b>

### 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.

As mining ceased at Stratford in June 2024, decommissioning of the site is well underway, with the focus on mine closure activities. As such, MidCoast Council has subsequently resolved to replace elected Councillors with staff representatives.

The committee is now comprised of:

- Five local community representatives;
- Two MidCoast staff representatives;
- Two Stratford Coal representatives with attendance from other personnel as required;
- One independent Chairperson.

### 2. CCC activities over last 12 months:

- The committee continued to meet four times during the reporting period in February, May, August and November, although this is likely to change in 2025 as operational activities come to an end.
- Topics discussed were progress of environmental management towards closure, including land and water management and rehabilitation activities, decommissioning of the rail loop, community complaints, company reports and employment figures, community sponsorship and the proposal for the Stratford Renewable Energy Hub (SREH). Although the SREH is not within the scope of this committee, nevertheless members are extremely interested in the project and the layout of solar panels over agricultural land.

As in previous years, planning for mine closure was the main topic of interest throughout the year and the need for broader community engagement with informative newsletters on progress, updated websites, future land use and employment opportunities and potential transition to a renewable energy hub.

- The committee had two guest speakers from MidCoast Council at the February meeting who presented on the Council's Koala Project and Beyond the Shed. The Koala Project briefed the committee on koala mapping, conservation of habitat and efforts to improve the safety and health of the koala population and building upon the knowledge to enhance

the long term benefits of all wildlife. Beyond the Shed is one of several Council initiatives to encourage local landholders to better manage their properties and the catchment through Landcare programs and funding. One of the programs included a sustainable farming practice with a major demonstration project on improving poultry farming in the Karuah Catchment. Both presentations and Council's goals were highly commended by the committee members.

- Attendance at meetings is consistently high. Apologies rare despite the long tenure of this group.
- Meetings are held on site and the May meeting included a tour of the communications tower on top of rehabilitated pasture land, the Old Main Pit (OMP) emplacement/ rehabilitation area, the Stratford East and Avon North Pits. A site tour was planned for the November meeting but weather conditions prevented this from occurring. To overcome the unpredictability of inclement weather around meetings schedules, Stratford Coal offered to accommodate future tours on alternate date options to suit the members.
- The committee meetings are informative and responsive to the members' needs. Items of interest are included in presentations at the behest of members. This committee marks its thirtieth year of existence. All parties, community, council and company have contributed to its success and longevity, based upon mutual understanding, trust and respect in an amicable forum. Community members, as long term residents, are well known within the community and provide an effective method to voice any concerns. Unlike recent years with nil complaints, four community complaints relating to noise were received during 2024. This was most likely caused by the change in operations with different machinery used towards mine closure. The committee discussed with Stratford staff how this could be mitigated and appropriate measures were implemented.
- At the November meeting the committee confirmed the currency of the previously adopted Terms of Reference.

### 3. Key issues

Issue	Actions taken	Next steps
<b>Mine Closure Planning</b>	<p>Ongoing consultation with CCC and broader community on mine closure planning via websites and newsletters.</p> <p>Appointment of specialist staff to assist with ongoing community liaison.</p> <p>Investigation of future land use and employment opportunities.</p>	<p>Ongoing liaison will support preparation of detailed mine closure planning and guide future consultation with all key stakeholders.</p> <p>Future proposals and information will be discussed with the CCC as it evolves.</p>

<b>Rehabilitation Progress</b>	Agenda item to each meeting. Updates included on webpage and newsletter.	Updates at quarterly meetings and as required.
<b>Site tours</b>	To accommodate weather conditions on meeting days, alternate date options be offered – November 2024.	Site tours offered as option at each meeting, weather permitting. Alternate dates offered as necessary.
<b>Main pit water quality</b>	To be included in each meeting presentation.	Included in November 2024 presentation and to be included thereafter.
<b>MidCoast Council Annual Financial Report on Community Enhancement Funding</b>	Comprehensive Report provided by Council to CCC.  (Resolution of Council to allocate 50% of contributions received from Stratford to the Education Fund and 25% of annual contributions for next two years to upgrade facilities within the Stratford area in consultation with committee.	Ongoing annual action.

#### 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.

<b>Name of chairperson:</b>	<b>Margaret MacDonald-Hill</b>
<b>Date:</b>	February 17 2025.