

Minutes of Extra-Ordinary Meeting Held at Ulan Coal Mine

Thursday 17 November 2005

CCC Attendees – Julia Imrie (JI), Bev Smiles (BS), Arthur Williams (AW), Rod Wilson (RW)

UCML Attendees – Stephen Bragg (SB), Murray Wood (MW), Phil English (PE), Phil Orr (PO)

Attending Guests – Dr Martin Denny (MD), Andrew Paffard (AP), Jenny Stobbs, Nicole Croker (NC)

Attending Chair – Gary Bruce (GB)

Meeting opened 1.10pm

MW welcomed CCC and updated CCC on recent mine operations, PE has joined UCML as EO

PE updated CCC on PG – now working at Bobadeen and other Ulan mines and monitoring programs

1. Review of minutes – extraordinary meeting of 24 August 2005

Jl comments still to be added, SB to review as he attended meeting. **NC to update and distribute minutes of 24/8/ after meeting.**

AW suggested the minutes be typed onto a screen at the meeting for all to agree at the meeting. All in agreement – **NC to type minutes at meetings in future.**

2. Monitoring of Ulan Creek During and after a Temporary Release of Mine Water - Dr Martin Denny

- Looked at what impacts this release would have on biota, particularly littoral vegetation (beside the water course)
- Discussed 8 sample sites along Ulan Creek (refer handout) – sites 3,5,7,8 are in-stream
- Aquatic vertebrates – Ulan Creek classed as ephemeral – eggs can lie dormant in bed for many years
- Used set sampling techniques for aquatic fauna – determined diversity
- Stream Invertebrate Grade Number – average Level
- Also undertook standardised bird counts
- Riparian vegetation condition – assessed using RARC technical guidelines (Rapid Appraisal of Riparian Condition)
- Tree dieback survey and photographs – determined canopy cover
- Presented results of surveys at each of 8 sites
- Discussion JI/MD re sampling and whether baseline data was collected – all sampling was taken after discharges commenced
- Discharges are in the order of 5ML/day
- Discussion re scoring system for sites –the higher the score the more sensitive the biota is to change in conditions

- Salinity level of release – SB - in the vicinity of 1300 – 1400uS
- Releases started on 18 September 2005 – monitoring undertaken monthly on the 18th
- Fauna will accumulate in pools in Ulan Creek
- Littoral vegetation survey – 3 survey techniques being used – transects, stream bank vegetation and canopy cover
- 4 vegetation communities found along the creekline
- ***MD to let JI know about Qld research technique paper – NC to provide email addresses for JI/MD to liaise***
- BS – can we expect Ulan Creek to turn into a regulated river flow rather than ephemeral?
- JI stated research regarding using an erratic release – MD/SB stated that it is an erratic flow as recommended by EPA
- BS asked about remediation plans if monitoring notes changes
- Discussion re iron staining/matting in monitoring areas and where Ulan Creek is in relation to active mining

3. Update on expansion of groundwater monitoring network - Andrew Paffard – Coffey Geosciences

- Existing piezometers – many have problems, particularly those in Permian Sandstones (Ulan seam) – are in the process of replacing unreliable piezometers and changing the construction method to improve reliability and confidence
- Andrew discussed installation schedule
- Also investigating Spring Gully fault and the impact the fault may have on mining
- Piezometers are located on both side of Spring Gully fault
- Discussion re water levels in piezometers/ pumping bores
- Initial results are indicating that fault does not block flows
- Results will assist in determining the limit of groundwater influence from underground mining
- Determining boundary conditions - should be completed by mid-2006
- Boundary piezometers are on private property – information will be confidential until owner's agreement provided
- Discussion regarding reliability of existing piezometers – calibrating of data
- Discussion re depth of piezometers and initial results, potential subsidence impacts, where water is coming from that is being discharged
- AP noted that there is no direct impact from mining on the river (river bed and water leaving the river) noted – discussed modelling methodology
- PO – mining is almost always down dip – mining is also undertaken in cells that create barriers to prevent the flow of water
- PO – will create this technical model and then factor in historical data from community experiences.

4. Draft Subsidence Management Plan Discussion

- PO – draft SMP is being sent to 9 govt departments and on public exhibition for 30 days.
- UCML draft SMP has been on exhibition – is a draft document, a management plan, open for public comment
- BS – CCC discussed a Subsidence Mgt Community Committee in April 2004? PO – no legislative requirement to have a subsidence community committee – there have been presentations to CCC on process
- SMP process falls under the Mining Act, previous SEE fell under EP&A Act
- Draft SMP consists of 3 volumes – 2 volumes have technical reports

- BS expressed concern that more notice was not given to the CCC re the exhibition period
- BS – sought clarification of the minutes of April 2004 re the requirement to form a Subsidence Community Consultative Committee
- BS – references in draft SMP to underground No.2 and 3? PO – are the same area – Ulan No. 2 to the south, No. 3 to the north – same as stage 2 and stage 3 in development consent
- AW requested brief summary of main issues in draft SMP
- JI – 2 areas of concern are the increase to a 400m longwall width from 250m width and impacts on the upper aquifers
- PO - draft SMP sets management plan for mine for next 3 years – what is going to happen and how it is going to be managed
- AW – Any subsidence effects on public assets? PO – public roads – Bobadeen Road – some purchase discussions underway – Telstra lines (feed Ulan Mine only) and small feeder electricity line (2 downstream users)
- ‘Hands on Rock’ not in area of SMP
- BS - Photographic record of surface features – who determined? PO – includes all dams, include flora and fauna reports
- JI - Rock falls and cracking in earlier panels – what %? SB – were much shallower than panels in draft SMP – limiting factor is depth of cover, angle of draw is 28 degrees – modelled on 30 degrees.
- BS – would be good to have a look on the ground at what subsidence means/looks like, PO/SB – can ***organise for CCC to look at various features in the field & to organise Dr Ken Mills to attend meeting to help explain subsidence concepts – CCC agreed on pre mid December meeting to address this.***
- ***CCC requested that Executive Summary of draft SMP be forwarded to committee. PO to investigate confidentiality aspects.***

5. General Business

AW – what is UCML’s policy on noxious weeds? Concerned about spread of St Johns Wort in district. SB – have had campaigns on Pattersons Curse, St John’s Wort, Tree of Heaven – campaigns are ongoing. Drill rigs are cleaned down before and after being used on site. Also have campaigns for feral animals.

Attending CCC members reviewed draft minutes and agreed to content. Minutes finalised.

Meeting closed 4.17 pm.

Note: Actions highlighted in bold italics