

## Meeting Notes

### Eraring Ash Dam Expansion- Community Consultative Committee (CCC)

Meeting No. 3

Thursday 8 October 2020 – 3.30- 5.45 pm

Location: Zoom Meeting

**Members present:** **Chairperson:** Margaret Harvie (Chairperson)

**Community representatives:** Joan McCarthy, Ron McCarthy, Neil Wynn, Kim Grierson, Derek Pola, Ingrid Schraner (for Coal-ash Community Alliance)

**Origin representatives:** Tony Phillips, Group Manager Operations Eraring, Lauren Barnaby, Group Manager Environment and Community, Fernanda Maluly Kemeid, Ash Strategy and Management Lead.

**Persons in attendance:** Emma Scutella (notetaker)

**Apologies:** Colin Bright, Gary Blaschke **Lake Macquarie City Council representative:** Cr David Belcher

Item no.	Details	
1.	<p><b>Welcome, Acknowledgement of Traditional owners, apologies and introductions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Margaret Harvie (MH) advised there was apologies from Colin Bright and Gary Blaschke with Ingrid Schraner (IS) welcomed as standing in for Gary</li> <li>Acknowledged Covid-19 impacts and need for meetings to remain online for the time being</li> <li>Acknowledged traditional owners</li> </ul>	
2.	<p><b>Declarations of pecuniary interests and other interests</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No interests of CCC members to be declared</li> <li>IS wanted to point out that she is paid to do research into coal ash and its reuse.</li> </ul>	
3.	<p><b>Actions from Previous Meeting</b></p> <p>MH explained that the meeting approach would be to focus on Origin presenting information before getting into the detail of addressing the questions/answers from the previous meeting.</p> <p>MH sought agreement to this approach and asked if there was anything that people wanted to raise at this time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joan McCarthy (JM) asked what had happened with the discussion around 'restorative justice'. MH advised that a response to this request from CCC members has been provided from Origin in the document circulated prior to the meeting.</li> <li>JM asked where the terms of reference was up to and whether it had been finalised. MH advised that the last meeting indicated that everyone was happy with the terms of reference as they are (that is apart from the request that there be a change to the name). It has been assumed that these are confirmed as per the version circulated prior to this meeting (dated October 2020).</li> </ul>	<p><b>ACTION: Terms of Reference to be resent to the CCC with confirmation that they are final.</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JM enquired about the request at the last meeting for a tour of the site. Tony Phillips (TP) advised that they had just revisited the Covid controls for the site and at this point they remain on the same level only allowing essential workers and visitors. No site visit or CCC meeting on site is possible at this time. This can be reviewed prior to next meeting.</li> <li>• Neil Wynn (NW) asked if the recent coal ash enquiry had visited the site. TP and Lauren Barnaby (LB) confirmed that this enquiry had not attended the Eraring site. The enquiry had not requested to visit the site.</li> </ul>	
4.	<p><b>Correspondence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MH acknowledged that there are a series of questions that have been received from CCC members since the last meeting and the answers to these have been provided by Origin and circulated in advance of the meeting.</li> </ul>	
5.	<p><b>Update on Project Progress</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Origin presented a video that was produced on site – this was to explain about the ash dam and its role.</li> <li>• Kim Grierson (KG) indicated that she felt the video showed the ash from too far away for it to be seen. LB reshown images of the site to explain the location of the ash in the footage.</li> <li>• KG asked about the dam lining/bottom of the dam. LB advised that there is no lining in the dam and this was not a requirement when the dam was created.</li> <li>• LB provided an overview of the NSW planning approval process especially as this relates to the Modification for the Dam (refer to the slides in the presentation attached).</li> <li>• Fernanda Maluly Kemeid (FMK) presented on dust management, dust management upgrade and dust management practices.</li> <li>• NW asked if the misting system was in place during last year's event. LB advised that it was not and has been put in place in response to this incident. The new system which has been a trial has been very effective to date.</li> <li>• KG asked for confirmation that there are no dust complaints for August and September. FMK confirmed there had been no complaints by community members made to the project.</li> <li>• KG asked what percentage of the uncapped part of the dam is covered by the misting system. FMK advised that it is currently 35%. KG asked if this area would be expanded. FMK explained that it is a rigid system and that they are looking into opportunities/areas that they may be able to use it but it is difficult to expand it at this time.</li> <li>• KG asked if the purpose of capping was for dust suppression or for site rehabilitation. FMK advised that it was for dust suppression.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ron McCarthy (RM) asked about the dust measuring stations and whether there was one to the South. FMK advised there is one to the South at Dora Creek, and one at Marks to the east</li> <li>• RM asked if the fallout from the stacks is measured by these stations. TP advised that there are separate monitors in place that advise if there are any particulates in the stacks.</li> <li>• KG suggested that Eraring could do an investigation into where the dust is coming from. TP advised that this had been looked into a few times - had been done so for a few people but it could become an endless job and Origin were confident that it's monitoring system provided a good indication of Eraring Power Station's contribution to overall emissions.</li> <li>• KG suggested that perhaps more monitors should be in place with the results available online. LB advised that the results were available online and they are accessible to the public.</li> <li>• NW asked TP what was the brown plume coming from the stacks in the late afternoon. TP advised he had not personally witnessed this but was likely NO<sub>2</sub> from NO<sub>x</sub> emissions or heat haze caused by a range of emissions. LB confirmed she understands that this is an orange NO<sub>2</sub> haze. <i>Origin confirms the power station NO<sub>x</sub> (as NO<sub>2</sub>) emissions are controlled by low NO<sub>x</sub> burners and are well within environment licence limits.</i></li> <li>• Derek Pola (DP) enquired about the exact dam area and the size of the wall. LB explained the location of various parts of the dam using the image from the video.</li> <li>• IS asked what was the relationship between the dam expansion and making the existing dam safer? FMK advised they are not touching the main wall as part of this expansion. The wall stability is a project that is separate to the Ash Dam Expansion.</li> <li>• IS asked if the dam expansion would put pressure on the existing wall. FMK advised that it would not as no deposits were going against the existing wall.</li> <li>• IS asked why all the ash is not being reused and the ash in the dam decreased. LB explained that the questions about reuse of the ash was covered in some depth in the previous meeting.</li> <li>• KG asked if the new part of the dam expansion was going to be lined. LB advised that it would not be and that this was not a requirement of the government approval.</li> <li>• Joan Macarthy left the meeting with apologies.</li> <li>• LB spoke to the look ahead for the project for the next 4 – 6 weeks.</li> </ul>	<p><b>ACTION: LB to provide the CCC with links to the online monitoring results</b></p>
6.	<p><b>Presentation on Ash Dam Stormwater Management System</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FMK presented a slide about water management and explained the water management process.</li> <li>• RM questioned if the excess water goes into Whitehead Lagoon. FMK advised that only in extreme events would excessive rain water get discharged into Lake Macquarie. LB confirmed that</li> </ul>	

	<p>only clean water goes into Whitehead Lagoon except in extreme weather events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NW asked about the license to allow excess water including heavy metals into Lake Macquarie, is it an open license? LB advised that it is monitored and there are requirements in the Environmental Protection Licence for Eraring.</li> <li>• KG asked if there was monitoring of the water that is put into Lake Macquarie. TP advised that Origin would need to come back with that answer. <i>It is confirmed that the water that goes to Lake Macquarie is monitored at the discharge points as per the requirements of the Environmental Protection Licence.</i></li> <li>• NW asked about the seepage drains and sediment coming from the drains. FMK advised that the surface water flowing from the catchment is diverted away from the ash dam, via a series of drains. This water is diverted before it comes into any contact with the ash dam, therefore is clean stormwater. LB explained that these drains are maintained on a regular schedule, and FMK indicated that any sediment excavated from the drains is put back into the ash dam.</li> <li>• RM asked if water from the sewage plant continues to be pumped into the station. TP advised that this does occur but the water is not discharged from the site. This water is used to produce steam for the energy production process.</li> <li>• DP asked about the run off from the dam wall and if it could be picking up material that would go into the clean water and then be dumped into Lake Macquarie. LB further explained the topography of the area and how the run off occurs.</li> <li>• RM advised that there should be monitoring of water going into Crooked Creek. LB advised that there was an EPA monitoring point there.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Action: Origin to advise on the monitoring of water that is put into Lake Macquarie</b></p>
7.	<p><b>Round the room with what we are hearing from the community and questions.</b></p> <p>MH also introduced that this was an opportunity to raise issues and concerns about Origins responses to questions raised by CCC members – as per the document distributed prior to the meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DP advised that he is observing that the general theme in the community is about the dust and mess. Everyone is assuming it is coming from the station.</li> <li>• IS advised the community thinks that the production of ash needs to be reduced and that capping is unacceptable. Wants to know what actions are being done to reduce it and reuse the ash that it being produced and ash which is already there. TP acknowledged that this is also frustrating for Origin.</li> <li>• KG indicated that she had nothing further to add from the questions that she had already asked.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NW asked TP why Eraring are accepting coal with a higher ash content. TP advised that there are limits on what they accept but there is a need for flexibility in the sources of supplies for the power station.</li> <li>• NW advised that many people on the community facebook pages are questioning the dust and what can be done about it.</li> <li>• NW asked who was in charge at Eraring – who is the General Manager. TP advised that it was him.</li> <li>• NW enquired about retired workers and if Origin have a responsibility to them. Also, what is being done to protect current workers? FMK advised that all machinery is pressurised so that dust/particles cannot enter. When employees are working on the ground they are provided with face masks. TP advised that there are yearly health checks for employees - testing lung capacity etc.</li> <li>• NW asked if they go back to retired workers to monitor their health. TP said that this doesn't happen specifically but if someone had an issue something would be done about it.</li> <li>• NW asked if all of the asbestos had been removed. TP confirmed that it had been removed where this is possible.</li> <li>• RM advised that the community wanted to ensure no extra water will go down to muddy lake – they don't want it to get any worse.</li> </ul>	
8.	<p><b>Next meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was decided that the next meeting should be 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2020 at 3.30pm and that it be on zoom (given proximity to busy Christmas time).</li> </ul>	
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