



Secretary
Department of Planning & Environment
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2000

18 March 2016

Dear Madam

Community Consultative Committee Guidelines

I refer to the revised draft Community Consultative Committee Guidelines recently released by NSW Planning & Environment relative to State Significant Projects.

Firstly, may I commend the Department on the initiative to establish definitive guidelines relative to the formation of Community Consultative Committees.

As you would be aware Gunnedah Shire Council has been involved with a number of Consultative Committees over the last decade. These have been associated with major mining proposals primarily in the pre-development exploration phase, but also in the operational phase of mining developments.

Examination of the draft guidelines reveals that the processes and conventions followed in the two pre-development Community Consultative Committees for the Watermark and Caroonah proposals have been mirrored in the document.

In particular, the direction as detailed in the draft relative to appointment and role/responsibility of the Chair is fully supported. It has been apparent in the CCCs associated with the Watermark and Caroonah projects that a strong independent Chair has been critical to the success of the Community Consultative Committees.

Further, the clarity provided in the selection and appointment of other Committee members is also fully supported. It is pleasing that local government appointments are the sole responsibility of the local Council. However, Council believes that the wording in relation to alternate local government representatives could be strengthened to make it clear that this function also rests solely with Council.

Given that major projects often impact on more than one local government area it is also considered that specific provision should be made in the guidelines for each Council impacted by a development to be represented, rather than the generalised provision for 'Council' or 'local government' to be represented on the Committee.

The draft guidelines provide sufficient direction for the Committee whilst at the same time allowing flexibility in its operation and decision making. The draft guidelines also provide appropriate direction to ensure that Committee members are cognisant of their responsibilities and limitations.

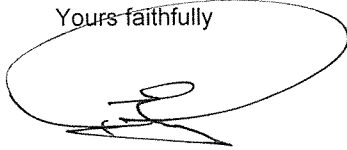
In terms of the role of the Chair, it is noted that payment of sitting fees and expenses is at the discretion of the Company. Given the critical role the Chair plays in the operation and success of the Committee it is suggested that some level of minimum remuneration should be required. This would ensure that the best possible candidates for this role can be sourced for the position. It is therefore suggested that the Company should be responsible for a minimum retainer and meeting defined expenses (such as travel and accommodation) in respect of the Chair's management of the Committee.

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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft guidelines. Council commends the Department on the initiative.

Should you require further information or comment on Council's submission please contact the Director Planning & Environmental Services, Mr Michael J Silver on 6740 2100.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Eric Groth', is enclosed within a hand-drawn oval.

Eric Groth
GENERAL MANAGER

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