

## **Submission on Revised Community Consultative Committee Guidelines**

### **- State Significant Projects**

*(submitted online 11/04/2016)*

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Draft Guidelines.

Prior to this submission I have not had the opportunity to provide comments or feedback on this revision. I have been a member of a Community Consultative Committee for over 12 years (Ulan Coal Mines since 2003 & Moolarben Coal Operations since 2006) and would like to make the following comments on the revised Community Consultative Committee Guidelines for State Significant Projects.

### **SELECTION AND PAYMENT OF CHAIR**

The choice and appointment of a suitably qualified and truly independent Chair working as an experienced facilitator is crucial to ensure impartiality, good meeting practise, effective exchange of information, and the fair resolution of disputes. The Chair should not be selected or directly paid remuneration by the Proponent (Company).

- The Chair should be an independent professional facilitator with no prior association with the mining industry appointed by the Dept. Planning from an agreed group of independent facilitators
- The Chair should be paid as a professional facilitator drawn from a fund made up of contributions from the companies as part of the development approval process.

### **SELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

This requires effective advertising including direct communication with local landholders in order to reach as many affected community members and relevant stakeholders as possible. When selecting community representatives a declaration of pecuniary interest should be submitted by the applicant and taken into account by the Chair when choosing representatives.

There is a need to avoid the current situation where CCC meetings regularly have more paid company employees and members with a financial interest in the project than unpaid community members.

Community input and time should be respected and recognised by the company. CCC meetings should not be used as box ticking exercise on the part of the company.

Community reps are donating their valuable time plus incurring out of pocket expenses related to travel to and from the venue and potential loss of work opportunities whilst attending meetings (particularly if self-employed). They provide local knowledge and at times their professional expertise in effect, free of charge to the company.

CCC meetings provide the company with an ideal opportunity for community consultation required under project approval conditions or proposed modifications. This requires a more formal framework within the meeting structure and advance notification and information supplied to community representatives. Proposed changes and modifications are often presented without prior warning or information at CCC meetings. The proponent should provide evidence of how community feedback has been addressed and suggested changes incorporated into the project.

### **MEETING REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES**

- It is important that community members receive relevant papers and information at least three business days before the meeting. This includes digital copies of monitoring results and reports (e.g. Modifications, AEMRs, Management Plans required under Project Approval and Audits). This allows members time to prepare for the meeting. It is unreasonable to expect community members to interpret and process complex information and graphs presented without warning at the meeting.
- CCC members should also be able to request the attendance of an independent expert to assist in the interpretation and interrogation of company reports and data.
- Members should be able to nominate their own alternate member
- CCC members should receive a draft copy of the Minutes for correction and comment within ten days of meeting. The minutes should record discussion points, including concerns and issues raised by member and whether they were resolved.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Draft CCC Guidelines, I hope these recommendations based on my experience of sitting on various CCC committees will be incorporated into the final guidelines.

Yours sincerely,

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