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## **RE: REVIEW OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE GUIDELINES**

I am a community member on the Bloomfield Colliery Community Consultative Committee and have been there since its inception. I believe this CCC works reasonably well and believe that is due to the following factors:

- the Independent chair does a good job – well organised and impartial
- the Environmental Officer is always in attendance
- the Mine Manager is also in attendance and sometimes another operational/planning person as well
- If there is an issue raised, the person with the authority to make operational changes to overcome it is there (ie the Mine Manager) and can give an undertaking on the spot to do something (and often does). I believe the Environmental Officer would not have this authority here, or in most other cases.
- it is the operational people who understand what is causing the impact on the surrounding community eg what is making the noise/dust/light spill etc – it is vital to have their input

I have had a look over the guidelines and there are a few things that particularly concern me:

- The Company nominating 2 options for Independent Chair. Maybe there needs to be a panel of suitable people to choose from, with a background in Planning/Council/Social Impact to understand the requirements of the job? (Not sure how practical this is as you head further West.) I would like to think companies would do the right thing, but can't assume this. Maybe nominee needs to do a letter stating why they are interested and addressing the criteria? It is obviously vital to get an independent chair, as they then recommend the community members!
- There needs to be transparency around the recommendations for community members – perhaps a list of successful and unsuccessful applicants back in the papers where the positions were advertised? The community will soon decide whether the best applicants are being chosen.

- Advertising in the “local press” does not necessarily cover everyone who might be interested. It should be advertised in a regional as well as a local paper eg Newcastle Herald as well as the Cessnock Advertiser &/or Maitland Mercury for us, or even free community-based papers in some smaller areas.
- I believe community representatives should nominate their own alternate representative and this can then be approved by the committee and the Department, as happened with me. I nominated my neighbour who experiences the same/similar impacts as me. I still advise locals the meeting is on and ask for any issues. My neighbour raises these and after the meeting, tells me what went on. We both receive the minutes and I circulate as normal to my email list. If the Department nominated someone I didn’t know, there would not be the same exchange of information and the local community would not necessarily be kept informed.
- There needs to be an operational representative of the company present at meetings who has sufficient authority to make decisions to overcome issues causing complaints. I believe Environmental Officers are unlikely to have this authority.
- It would be good to have something in there about minutes of the meeting being sufficiently expansive to allow other members of the community to understand what has been discussed! Often, they can be a bit sketchy and community reps then have to almost write a cover letter to explain what went on and to demonstrate that they really did raise the issues that had been raised with them prior to the meeting.
- At times, I have been the only community representative on the Bloomfield CCC. Advertising doesn’t seem to work - perhaps companies need to be compelled to letterbox drop affected areas to flush out more representatives? Or donate money eg \$10 000/month to local community projects until someone is found, to give them the incentive to find someone!

Yours faithfully,

Janet Murray