

**METROPOLITAN COAL
COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE - MEETING MINUTES**

Date: Tuesday 18 November 2025
Time: Commenced 3:03pm
Location: Metropolitan Coal Mine Meeting Room, Upper Administration, Helensburgh

CCC Attendees:

- Michael Ulph (MU) - Independent Chairperson
- Stephen Love (SL) - Peabody Metropolitan Coal
- Kane Organ (KO) - Peabody Metropolitan Coal
- James Hannigan (JH) - Peabody Metropolitan Coal
- Nicolas Tucker (NT) - Peabody Metropolitan Coal
- Ron Zwicker (RZ) - Wollongong City Council (WCC)
- Kerrie Belter (KB) - CCC Community Member
- Allan House (AH) - CCC Member – Landcare and Historical Society
- Peter Turner (PT) - CCC Community Member

Visitor:

- Dr Gilad Bino (GB) - UNSW Platypus Conservation Initiative

Apologies:

- Vicki Christie (VC) - CCC Member
- Patricia Gauci (PG) - CCC Member
- Keith Hawkins (KH) - CCC Member

Welcome and introductions:

- MU acknowledged Traditional Owners, welcomed and thanked members for attending and welcomed guest speaker Gilad Bino from UNSW's Platypus Conservation Initiative to the CCC.

Declarations of interest:

- MU declared his position as Independent Chair for the CCC approved by the Director General of the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) and engaged by Peabody.

Action items from previous meeting:

- MU provided CCC meeting minutes to members on 15 July 2025, there was no feedback or requests for alterations.
- MU confirmed action had been completed regarding inviting Gilad Bino to present to the CCC information and updates on the Platypus Conservation Initiative.

Correspondence:

- Minutes and meeting invitations.
- Email from a local resident regarding the recent Modification, and potential for attendance at a CCC meeting – to be discussed in general business.

Platypus Conservation Initiative (PCI) Update on Reintroduction of Platypus to the Royal National Park – Dr Gilad Bino, A/Prof UNSW

- GB provided an overview of historical platypus populations and distribution, current threats and challenges and work undertaken both prior to and since the reintroduction to the Royal National Park in 2023. GB has been involved in this area for more than ten years. Work to protect the introduced platypus assists the ecology across the catchment.
- Metropolitan's contribution of \$630,000 over three years will enable the program to continue after initial funding was expended.
- MU enquired about historical hunting of platypus. GB confirmed historically platypus had been hunted for hides but had little data on number. Historical accounts talk reference high densities in the 1800s early 1900's.
- PT asked how many platypuses will be released into the Royal NP. GB explained that the current program will see a total of 20 introduced (3 were introduced in 2025, with another 4 to be introduced in 2026 and 3 in 2027). PCI will continue to monitor population in order to assess the carrying capacity in the NP and if additional animals are required to ensure a good genetic mix.
- MU asked if there were any known connections with other populations. No, but genetic diversity will be monitored and long-term maintenance will be undertaken.
- AH raised concern for the platypus population in the Royal National Park (RNP) given ongoing discharges of raw sewage into the Hacking River from the Helensburgh sewer pump station during large rain events. Helensburgh Landcare has resolved to submit a complaint to the EPA due to a perceived lack of action from Sydney Water to mitigate the problem. GB

METROPOLITAN COAL

acknowledged there are a range of pollutant sources in the Hacking River due to the developed catchments in the upper reaches of the river system.

- MU highlighted a similar sewer problem in the Hunter Region involving septic tank overflows into the waters around Karuah and the impacts on the oyster populations. GB confirmed that comprehensive water quality and aquatic ecology testing was undertaken before and since the reintroduction.
- MU asked what ages of Platypus were being relocated. GB explained that it is difficult to age a platypus past the juvenile stage, so PCI selects a mix of adult males and females which are in good condition for capture and release.
- MU asked if new juveniles were being tagged/retagged when found. GB said yes, tags are being externally attached to gain insights into breeding behaviour etc.
- AH asked if they have surveyed Heathcote NP. GB advised they had collected EDNA from water samples with no trace of platypus. He suggested that it would be great to continuously monitor there, but has no plans until further funding.
- SL asked if the success of this program could serve as a template for other reintroduction programs, or if there is too much inherent variability in species to transfer any knowledge. GB believes that the program has transferable learnings, particularly around gathering of data to confirm suitability of an ecosystem, while acknowledging that any reintroduction carries some quantum of risk that must be managed.
- MU asked if AI and drones have been used to locate platypus. GB indicated that the use of drones have been useful in habitat assessment, being an aquatic creature, platypus are not conducive to drone surveys the way a koala or other land mammal may be.
- MU thanks GB for taking the time to meet with the CCC to discuss the PCI.

Metropolitan Coal operations update – Stephen Love, Environment & Community Superintendent

A presentation was provided to the CCC regarding:

- Extraction Plan Approval
- Mining Update
- Upland Swamp Monitoring Program
- Exploration Application
- LW317-318 Modification
- Woronora Reservoir Water Quality
- Community Sponsorships

Extraction Plan Approval

- Metropolitan submitted the Longwalls 311-316 Extraction Plan to DPHI et al for review in March 2024
- Longwall 311 was approved in October 2024 while IEAPM continued to consider any additional measures required as LWs 312-316 approach the large swamps
- Partial extraction of LW312 was approved in July 2025 while additional work on the Giant Dragonfly was undertaken
- PT asked for clarification on swamp standoffs. SL explained that a southern section of LWs 312 and 313 has been sterilised (will not be mined) in order to minimise potential subsidence effects at Swamp 92.
- MU asked how many Large Dragonflies had been recorded. SL explained that monitoring to date had only identified numbers in the single digits in swamps 92 and 77.

Upland Swamp Monitoring

- Large swamp monitoring includes measuring subsidence, downstream flow, surface and ground water monitoring, iron staining imaging, vegetation, amphibian and Giant Dragonfly monitoring. Drone surveys have recently been added.
- Trigger Action Response Plans (TARPs) outline the level of action and monitoring required in response to mining effects near or under large swamps.
- AH asked if the drone surveys of swamps follow a set path. SL confirmed that the vegetation drone surveys of swamps are carried out on a preprogrammed flight path (transect) each monitoring flight.
- Swamp 77 has recently been undermined, with no signs of cracking at this time. Piezometers are used to measure groundwater pressure.

Exploration

- Metropolitan has applied for an additional Exploration Lease Area (ELA 6929), with the assessment process expected to be completed in 2026. This would be by in-seam drilling, with no disturbance of the surface).

LW 317-318 Project Modification

- Submitted the Mod report to DPHI in June

METROPOLITAN COAL

- 225 submissions were made, with 34% in support, 61% objected and 4% comments
- Response to submissions should be uploaded soon as it was submitted to DPHI last week
- RZ asked if the modification was available to the public. SL confirmed that all reports and stakeholder submissions are published on the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) website.

Woronora Reservoir Water Quality

- SL showed a chart of historical water quality from 1960s. Metal content is shown to be impacted by water volumes.
- PT asked where the WQ samples were collected. SL informed that WQ data sampled at Woronora Dam wall at 1-2m below water level.
- AH asked if any sediment samples were taken in the dam. SL confirmed that sediment samples were collected by WaterNSW in 2012 from both arms of the Woronora Reservoir (Woronora River and Waratah Rivulet). The sediment samples were tested for metals concentrations with no trends identified that would indicate that the mining impacts observed on Waratah Rivulet were contributing to metal loads in reservoir sediments compared to the Woronora River arm sediments.

Community Sponsorships

- SL showed a list of 14 organisations/events supported by Metropolitan, including the Symbio Southern Stuttering Frog Breeding Program
- KB asked how the Frog Breeding Program with Symbio was tracking. SL confirmed that he would seek a guest speaker from the program to present progress to the CCC, as 2026 will be the third year of the program.
- SL thanked the CCC members for their attendance through the year.

General Business

- AH raised a claim he had recently been queried on from the media that the EPA had directed Metropolitan to monitor water quality in the historic rail tunnel (also known as the glow worm tunnel) which ultimately flows into Camp Creek due to Sydney Water sewage overflows. SL confirmed that this was not the case – Metropolitan is not responsible for water or sewage reporting to the tunnel from the northern end. In the case of sewage spills, this would be a

Sydney Water responsibility.

- MU asked AH if he was dealing directly with EPA. AH confirmed that footage and evidence of Sydney Water's raw sewage discharges had been provided to EPA and Sydney Water for action but has yet to be rectified.
- KB asked AH if there had been any update on repairs to the entrance road to Helensburgh Train Station after the damage caused in part by sewage overflows in 2024. AH indicated that work crews had been to site, but actual repairs had yet to commence.
- AH asked about weed management at Metropolitan's surface facilities area with the rapid spread of Arum Lilly in Helensburgh in recent years of high rainfall. SL confirmed that weed management contractors would turn their attention to the lilies now that climate conditions were becoming drier.
- AH asked if the historic information signs on Metropolitan's boundary could be updated as they were looking weathered. SL confirmed Metropolitan would investigate renewing the signs.
- KB asked what the cameras at the mine entrance and on Parkes Street were for. SL explained that a traffic study had been conducted to better understand traffic flows to and from site and through Helensburgh more generally.
- MU asked if the Enterprise Agreement had been settled with the underground workforce. SL confirmed that a new enterprise agreement had been struck shortly after the last CCC meeting in July, and site was back to business as usual.
- AH asked about the RFS and hazard reductions onsite and surrounding Crown Lands. SL explained that there are a couple of small asset protection zones on the property which Metropolitan maintains. KO explained that the Rural Fire Service liaise with Metropolitan when undertaking nearby hazard reduction such as pile burns or vegetation management larger control lines and backburning are not undertaken near the mine.
- MU raised a recent request from a community member expressing interest in attending a CCC meeting as an observer. CCC members discussed the request and agreed that provided that the community member adhered to the relevant CCC Guidelines, an invitation could be given to attend the next meeting.

Meeting closed: 4:35pm

Proposed next meeting: Dates to be confirmed for 2026