

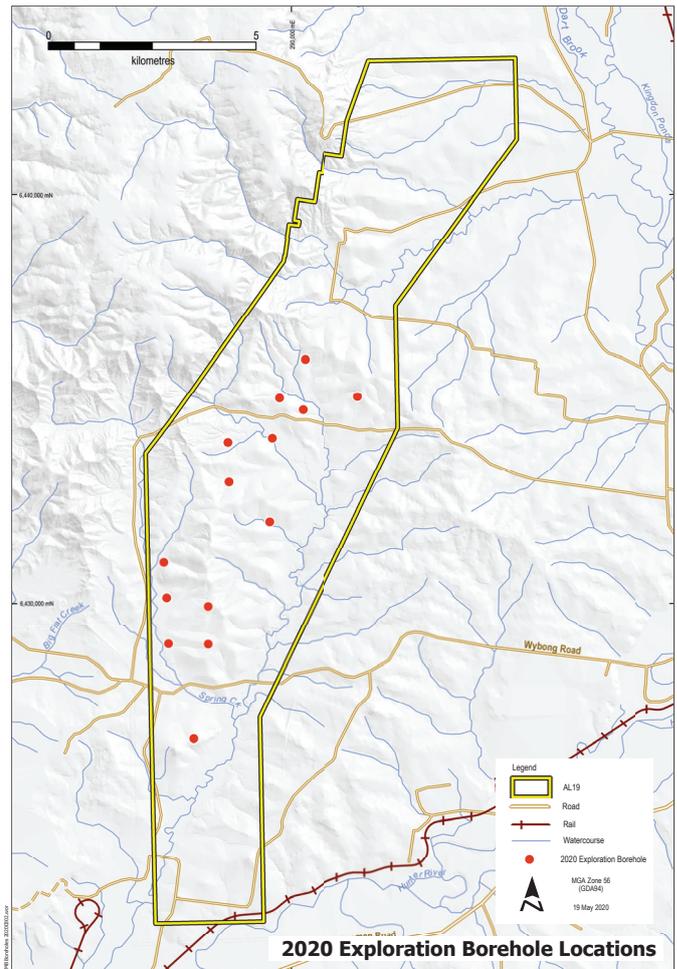
Muswellbrook Coal

West Muswellbrook Project Update | November 2020

What is the status of the West Muswellbrook Exploration Project?

Muswellbrook Coal Company (MCC) commenced exploration activities for the West Muswellbrook Exploration Project in July 2020. The 12-month exploration program involves the collection of information and geological data to assess the viability of an underground mine.

The program is anticipated to conclude mid-2021 – a decision on the next steps for the project, including whether to pursue an underground mine on AL 19 will be based on findings from these exploration activities, once the assessment of the exploration information is completed.



The exploration program consists of the drilling of up to 14 boreholes, with 10 of the drill sites located on land owned by MCC and the other 4 located on private land. Land access arrangements have been developed with the private landholders. This exploration activity is primarily located on the western side of the AL 19 area with all exploration drilling being conducted in the Muswellbrook Shire Council area.

What consultation has been conducted?

MCC has developed a comprehensive approach to community consultation for the West Muswellbrook Project which exceeds the 2016 Exploration Code of Practice: Community Consultation (Code of Practice) and

is informed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) framework which is recognised good practice in community consultation.

In July 2020, MCC commenced the West Muswellbrook Exploration Project community consultation program, focusing on ensuring affected landholders and nearby neighbours were informed about the West Muswellbrook Exploration Project and provided an opportunity to raise any concerns.

In addition, local interested parties and residents of the broader area were notified. Stakeholders engaged in consultation include:

- Landholders and licencees of AL 19
- Landholders, residents and businesses neighbouring the exploration activity area

- Muswellbrook Shire Council
- Upper Hunter Shire Council
- Residents of the broader area
- Local community/environment groups
- Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council
- NSW State Member for Upper Hunter
- NSW Department for Planning, Industry and Environment

MCC adopted a variety of engagement methods during the consultation program, including meetings with landholders and key stakeholders, distribution of a public notification flyer via letterbox drop, public notification via the online edition of the Muswellbrook Chronicle, project website updates, and response to correspondence provided via telephone, email, and letter.

Consultation was undertaken during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the methods of engagement adhered to government and health requirements around social distancing and hygiene to ensure the safety of the West Muswellbrook Project community, technical experts, and MCC staff. MCC will continue to adhere to the government and health advice when consulting during the COVID-19 pandemic.

MCC would like to thank participants of the consultation program for their time and contributions.

Consultation outcomes

The main issues raised during the community consultation program included uncertainty around project timing and processes, difficulties with receiving information via letterbox drop, property acquisition, and questions surrounding the shift in focus from assessing the feasibility of an open-cut mine to assessing the feasibility of an underground mine. These issues have:

- informed the creation of a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document which is available on the West Muswellbrook Project website:
<https://www.idemitsu.com.au/mining/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/West-Muswellbrook-Exploration-Project-FAQs.pdf>

- contributed to the Annual Community Consultation Report as part of the annual reporting requirements for AL 19;
- allowed for updating of the MCC database with the most up to date contact information;
- provided the opportunity for MCC to provide clear and accurate responses to landholder concerns; and
- improved relationships.

Next steps moving forward

Muswellbrook Coal recognises the importance of community consultation and are committed to their goal of adhering to and exceeding the consultation requirements of the Code of Practice.

As the exploration program progresses MCC will continue to provide project updates and information as it becomes available.

The following consultation activities will occur on an ongoing basis throughout the life of the West Muswellbrook Exploration Project:

- meetings with key stakeholders;
- responding to correspondence and/or submissions;
- providing outcomes of exploration activities that are not commercial in confidence, as available and as requested;
- providing project updates on the dedicated project website;
- maintenance of the project email address and 1800 number; and
- public notification of high visibility activities.

MCC is underpinned by core values that translate into viewing work as an opportunity for growth, committing to operating with integrity, and striving to constantly learn and improve.

In addition to consultation related to its exploration activities, MCC is dedicated to exploring and pursuing shared value opportunities at a level commensurate with the scale of the West Muswellbrook Exploration Project.

How can I find out more?

Additional information, including project FAQs, the Community Consultation Strategy, and previous newsletters, is available on the West Muswellbrook Project website:

<https://www.idemitsu.com.au/mining/projects/west-muswellbrook/>

For enquiries please contact either Phillip Hetherington (West Muswellbrook Project Coordinator) or Paul Martinkus (Project Manager) via:

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