

GPM

Minutes of CCG Meeting

20 November 2024

Barton Centre Conference Centre
Wallerawang

Present:

Dougal Mulvey, Acting Chief Executive Officer (DM)
Paul Glasson, Western Region Manager (PG)
John Pola, GPM Environment and Safety Manager (JP)
Carol Cropper, Pursuit Communications (CC)

Apologies:

Karen Simpson

No-Shows:

Morgan Starkey
Bernadette Ryan

Paul Curran (PC)

Graham Johnson (GJ)

Ross Guihot (RG)

Minutes:

1. CCG members arrived at 6pm.
2. JP welcomed the group and introduced Dougal Mulvey, the GPM Acting Chief Executive Officer (DM). JP announced that the permanent CEO should be appointed in February, and should be present at the next meeting in 2025.
3. JP began his presentation outlining the agenda for evening, being:
 - Introductions
 - Recap on Previous Meetings
 - GPM's Activities since last meeting
 - Proposed works over next six months
 - Investigations to date and planned next steps
 - Committee feedback and issues
4. JP gave a site activity update from the last meeting as follows:
 - Fresh Water Diversion Pond one complete,
 - SSCAD Water Treatment upgrades improved metal extractions,
 - Section 5 of KVAR/KVAD stability buttress complete (area between KVAR and Sawyers Swamp Creek Ash Dam)
 - Material requirements 6 to 8 Million tonnes over the next 10 years.
 - Detailed Site Investigation underway – field work is almost at completion. Studies and modelling will then be carried out showing areas of risk and contamination.
 - Site Dam Safety presentation by John Pola
 - Issues raised: contact with Maddox Lane Neighbour has been made with a very successful outcome – drilling and sampling has been completed on that site.

5. JP then outlined GPM activities since the last meeting:

- Shaping KVAR floor and Final Holding Pond is almost complete. Material from this job was used to cover SSCAD Landfill Area.
- Springvale's old dam has been rehabilitated and is now almost gone. The dam has been reshaped, top-soiled, re-seeded and hydromulched - just waiting now for the vegetation to take hold. GJ asked where the Springvale Licensed Discharge was located. PG showed the group a detailed map of where this was.
- Completed the Wetland Pond (on the northern side of the KVAR) has been converted to a sediment control pen – all the drainage from the northern side of the KVAR goes into this area and if the plan goes well, everything will settle by itself, but if required, flocculant will be introduced with the goal to be able to discharge this storm water as clean water.
- Installed 48,000m² of hydromulch erosion protection.
- Continued covering of contaminated areas - the construction dump has been covered and the active asbestos dump has been capped, along with continued shaping in and around the Lidsdale cut.
- Detailed site investigations - completed drilling, test pits and asbestos site walkover
- Completed Due Diligence investigations regarding Centennial adjacent property – looking at relocating Sawyers Swamp Creek up through that area
- A desk top dam emergency exercise was undertaken for the Sawyers Creek Dam – from this exercise GPM is now able to start a practical crisis preparedness exercise aimed for February 2025.
- PG has been preparing the SSCAD design for lowering of the dam spillway – dropping it by 1.6m to minimise the amount of time the water in the dam is above the filter line. This significantly reduces the risk profile of the dam.

6. JP outlined progress with Environment Protection Authority:

- CLM Act Voluntary Management Plan (VMP): final comment has been received by EPA and the updated plan will be returned to EPA once signed off by the MD and Company Secretary. There are also some minor changes to the communication plan setting out how GPM communicates with the community about remediation works.
- Submission of a water treatment options study – JP said he is happy with the way it is working but wants to make it perform even better. The plan for this has been submitted to the EPA (15th October) and now GPM is working on how they can practically improve the working of the plant – looking at real-time water monitoring and identifying the gaps.
- EPL variation submitted to import material outside of VENM (Virgin Excavated Natural Material) or ENM (Excavated Natural Material), for example being able to accept Clarence Colliery wash and reject material.
- Following consultation with NSW fisheries, DPHI assessing the Sawyers Swamp Creek re-alignment stage one – we are simply going to move it 30-40m which will allow the raising of the buttress. If the Centennial land is acquired, we can plan for a final relocation of the creek in a couple of years' time.

- JP said that further testing of the pilot advanced water treatment plant was conducted and whereas there were some positives, the plant is still not achieving what was suggested it could do. Evaporation pond trials and investigations are shaping as a viable option. GPM was looking at improving of recovery of water through reverse osmosis but found that this produced too much waste. Now GPM is thinking of treating the seepage coming into the Lidsdale Cut via an evaporation process using downdraught evaporators.

7. JP outlined GPM activities for the next 6 months:

- Operations and Maintenance: Site Water Management; Sediment and erosion controls and Site Monitoring
- Site Works: subject to contract negotiations, board approval weather and material availability. This will allow us to continue with construction of freshwater diversions off the ash dam, the ongoing construction of the KVAR stabilisation, construction of 4 Southern Catchment sediment treatment ponds, and continue with delivery of materials to site for above works.
- Investigating ways of using ash for displacement of SSCAD water: dredging or similar. Pushing the water away from the dam embankment, making the dam safer.
- Further evaporation and water treatment investigations – looking at ways to improve the water quality coming out of the water treatment plant

8. JP then announced a 10 minute break.

9. JP continued his presentation with Background Information on the Contaminated Land, Voluntary Management Plan (VMP):

- On 27/6/22, the site was declared as significantly contaminated by the NSW EPA.
- GPM prepared a VMP outlining the proposed investigation and remediation approach which was submitted to the NSW EPA on 11 October 2023.
- GPM and the NSW EPA have been in consultation since the 11 October 2023 with agreement all but in place
- EMM have been engaged by GPM to carry out the contamination investigation, the scope of work is referred to as a Detailed Site Investigation (DSI).
- Kylie Lloyd from Geosyntec Consultants has been engaged by GPM as a NSW EPA Accredited Auditor to independently review EMM's work.
- EMM, the Site Auditor and GPM have been in ongoing consultation via progress meetings throughout the DSI field program.

The detailed report of the site investigations is due in April 2025.

10. JP went through the Contaminated Land VMP investigation progress and the scope of work:

- Most of this year has seen massive drilling activity, taking 900 soil samples, which involved digging pits up to 1m deep, taking samples and putting in 120 bores, some of them as deep as 150m.
- JP explained that the soil samples have been analysed by the laboratory for contaminants of concern, mainly metals, acidic seepage/drainage, salinity, sulphate, ammonia, fluoride, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and asbestos.
- The groundwater, surface water and sediment sampling component of the investigation are in the planning stages and will be completed in November – December 2024.

11. JP outlined the next steps in place for GPM

- The VMP lists the reporting requirements and timeframe for submission of reports. Once the VMP is endorsed by the NSW EPA, this will be publicly available information.
- A DSI report documents the findings and recommendations of relevance to the contamination as a whole. In accordance with the VMP, the DSI report is scheduled to be completed by April 2025.
- Based on the outcomes of the DSI, a Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessment (HHERA) (if required) will be prepared to identify site specific soil and groundwater acceptance criteria for the site and for the remediation works. In accordance with the VMP, the HHERA is scheduled to be completed by May 2025.
- A Remedial Options Assessment (ROA) and Remedial Action Plan(s) (RAP) will be prepared to inform remediation requirements. In accordance with the VMP, the ROA is scheduled to be completed by August 2025 and the RAP is scheduled to be completed by November 2025.
- To complete the ROA and ROP, DM explained GPM needs to understand the final land use, on both contaminated land and outside contaminated land.

12. JP finished off the meeting with a short discussion about opportunities for the site after complete remediation which may not be for another 20 years.

There are areas which be considered for development and productive utilisation, such as the Heritage listed house and ex Cobb & Co Barn GPM has restored and is currently using. And there are many ideas for using fly ash, but none have been able to reach financial close.

The ash at the KVAR site is not suitable for the many ash projects being conducted around the world at present. Maybe in the future, technology will change this outcome, but for now there is no use for the KVAR ash.

GJ asked JP what future use of the site would look like and at this stage JP said it was impossible to answer. In 20 years' time this decision would be in the hands of Town Planners. GJ suggested that a sensible use for the now capped and revegetated dam would be for grazing which would keep maintenance costs down.

13. JP then called the meeting to a close.