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Lidsdale Community Newsletter

Progress, rehabilitation and community updates from the Lidsdale site.



Message from the CEO

Welcome to the second edition of the Lidsdale Community Newsletter. It's been a busy few months, and I'm pleased to share some of what's been happening on site and in the community.

You'll meet some of the members of our Community Consultation Group, who meet with us every quarter to hear updates, ask questions and share their local knowledge. Their input helps us do this work better.

On site, we've upgraded our Water Treatment Plant with new clarifiers, helping it keep the water consistently clear and perform reliably day to day. We're also preparing to start work on new stormwater basins in the Southern Paddock in November. A redesign, shaped by an environmental study, means far fewer trees need to be removed, and the basins will help keep sediment load low and out of local waterways.

We've also been getting involved in the community, supporting a picnic table project with Lithgow High School's Support Unit, sponsoring Gone Fishing Day at Lake Wallace and working towards a new sign for Lidsdale. And we say farewell to John Pola, our Environmental and Dam Safety Manager, who retires in November after ten years with GPM.

Thank you for reading, and for your interest in Lidsdale. We look forward to sharing more with you in the months ahead.

Meet the locals helping shape Lidsdale

Every quarter, a group of local residents meets at GPM's Barn Cottage at Lidsdale to hear what's happening on site, ask questions and share their local knowledge. Some meetings are a presentation and others are a site tour, so the group can see how works are progressing first-hand. It's a friendly group of people who either live close to the site or have a professional interest in rehabilitating former industrial land.



From left: Graham Johnson, Ross Guihot, Marlon Frost, David Wood, Bernadette Ryan, Jeanette Beecroft

Bernadette Ryan joined in October 2023. She's passionate about accessibility and making sure everyone can enjoy the local area. Bernadette is also closely involved with the Wallerawang Lidsdale Progress Association, and shares what she learns at the meetings with them.

Graham Johnson is a long-term Portland resident and retired architect who joined in October 2023. He has a strong interest in good environmental outcomes and in what the former industrial land could be used for in the future. His professional background means he understands many of the issues involved in remediation, and he brings creative ideas to every meeting.

Paul Curran lives close to the site and runs a nearby business, Good Earth Landscaping. He joined in October 2023 to stay informed about what's happening on site and to represent the local community.

Ross Guihot is a local resident and former Earth and Environmental Science teacher at Lithgow High School. He joined in October 2023 because he's interested in the science behind rehabilitating former industrial and mining sites, including how ash can affect the environment and community in the short and long term. He also contributes at every meeting.

Jeanette Beecroft joined in February 2026. She lives close to the site and wanted to learn more about the clean-up planned there and how GPM intends to achieve the outcome.

If you'd like to join our CCG, call **02 4390 8994** or email **info@gpmco.com.au.**

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Water Treatment Plant upgrade boosts performance



Over the past six months, we've upgraded the Water Treatment Plant at Lidsdale by adding new clarifiers. A clarifier is a large tank that slows the water right down. This gives tiny suspended particles time to sink to the bottom before the water moves on to the next stage of treatment.

The water leaving the site has consistently met the required standards. The new clarifiers help the plant do the job even better, by separating out more of the tiny particles so the water stays consistently clear. They also mean we rely less on our return water canal, which acts as a back-up for catching any leftover sediment.

The leftover sludge is then pumped into large fabric tubes called Geo-tubes. The tubes let the water drain out while keeping the solids inside. That means less waste to handle, and what's left can be managed safely and responsibly.

The upgrade helps the plant perform reliably day to day and supports the long-term care of the environment around the site.

Southern Paddock stormwater basins: a smarter design, starting in November

Work on the new stormwater basins in the Southern Paddock is now planned to start in November. The basins will catch rainwater running off clean areas of the site and give sediment a chance to settle before the water continues towards the Coxs River.

The wait has made the project better. A full-season environmental study found Black Gums, a protected native eucalypt, growing along the natural drainage lines. We went back to the designers, moved the basins slightly and linked them using the creek lines already established. That means no new channels and far fewer trees removed. Any trees that do come down will go to local business Marrangaroo Timbers.

The works should take around 10 weeks, with no expected additional noise or truck movements. We'll let our neighbours know before work starts.







Building skills with Lithgow High School

GPM is proud to support Lithgow High School's Support Unit with a hands-on project that brings together students, local business and industry. GPM has donated the supplies students need to build a picnic table, giving them a chance to learn practical skills while creating something useful.

Local business Marrangaroo Timbers is also pitching in by supplying the timber. Shane Monaghan, who regularly does work on site for GPM, helped connect the project with this trusted local supplier.

When it's finished, the picnic table will be placed on site at GPM as a lasting reminder of what can be achieved when industry, schools and local business work together.

Lidsdale town sign

Every town has a story to tell, and Lidsdale's is worth celebrating. GPM is excited to sponsor a new town sign, a landmark to welcome people to Lidsdale.

We want the community to have the final say, so we'll be working with our CCG to choose a design that captures what makes Lidsdale special. There are a few steps to go, including settling on a location and securing the necessary approvals, but we're looking forward to seeing it take shape. Watch this space!

Casting a line for the community



GPM is proud to sponsor Gone Fishing Day at Lake Wallace on Sunday 18 October, in support of the local community. The Wallerawang Acclimatisation Society runs the day as part of a NSW Government initiative that encourages people of all ages to get out on the water and give fishing a go. There's a fishing competition, information talks, free fly-casting lessons and plenty of prizes, and past events have drawn around 500 people.

This year's theme is Tigers on the Loose. The NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) is supporting the day with a special release of around 250 to 300 large tiger trout (a striped cross between brown and brook trout) and rainbow trout, weighing 3 to 5 kilograms.

The Society is a group of passionate local anglers who volunteer their time to stock nearby streams and dams with trout and bass, working closely with DPIRD. Money raised on the day goes back into local fishing, including projects like the all-access fishing pontoon at Lake Wallace. GPM's sponsorship is helping to pay for competition and raffle prizes.

Marlon Frost, GPM's Western Region Manager, was also invited to join the Society on one of its fish release days, visiting the Mill Pond at Portland and Thomsons Creek Dam. Thomsons Creek Dam is a well-known spot for big trophy trout and draws anglers from as far as Sydney and Wollongong. About 2,000 yearling trout (young fish about a year old) were released across the two waters. Some were netted from the tanks and others slid out through a chute into the water.

"It was a great couple of hours," said Marlon. "The Society volunteers put in a huge amount of work to keep our local waterways stocked, and it was a pleasure to see it first-hand. Supporting groups like this is a great way for GPM to give back to the community we work in.

Farewell John — A decade of service, and plenty of stories

After ten years with GPM, John Pola, our Environmental and Dam Safety Manager, is retiring this November. John is our last original staff member, commencing on formation of GPM in November 2016, long before GPM looked anything like it does today.

John came to GPM after a long career in and around the coal mines of the upper Hunter Valley. He was initially advised he'd be required for three years, but it soon became apparent that works would be required well beyond this timeframe. It has certainly been a long three years!

The early days were very different. When GPM was formed, there were just four people, and only the Site Manager worked full time. John's first visit to the Munmorah site was a real eye opener.

As GPM grew, so did John's role. When the company took over the Lidsdale site in September 2020, he stepped in as Site Manager at Munmorah while also looking after environment, dam safety and workplace health and safety across the company. By early 2021 the team had grown to about eight people. Today there are 14.

Among his career highlights, John counts initiating the 2018 blast for Boilers 1 and 2 at Munmorah. What he's most proud of is developing and implementing GPM's Dam Safety Management System, which helps make sure the two dams GPM manages meet strict safety requirements.

John won't be here to see the clean-up of the former Munmorah power station site begin, but the studies, planning and safety systems he helped put in place will carry that work forward.

In retirement, he's planning a little travel, time with family, and a chance to relax and get fit. And his words of wisdom for someone just starting out? Typically direct: "Don't take advice. Do what you think is best."

Thank you for your valuable contributions, John, and enjoy every minute.

More Online

Visit our website for more information. It is loaded with great documents — including our Year in Review (coming soon), Voluntary Management Proposal updates, rehabilitation reports, news articles, and links to our environmental data portal.

gpmco.com.au/lidsdale