

## 12. Community Consultation

Community consultation has been an ongoing feature of the Proponent's assessment process and Project development. Potentially affected landholders and government agencies have been involved in consultation before the official EIS process began. Feedback from consultation was used in the Project planning process.

Consultation was also undertaken as part of the study process and helped to inform the social impact assessment. This consultation included:

- a community survey and newsletter;
- information and feedback tools such as a freecall number;
- information bulletins and meetings with the Groundwater Users Group; and
- public information sessions for the Clermont community, which were advertised in the local "Clermont Rag" publication and the Central Queensland News.

The following section outlines the community consultation process undertaken by RTCA and Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB) during the EIS process. Consultation conducted with the various government agencies is also outlined.

### 12.1 Methodology

#### 12.1.1 Community Survey and Newsletter

A double-sided A3 newsletter was prepared and distributed to 1300 residents and businesses in Clermont in the first week of February 2004. The newsletter included:

- the Project background;
- information about the Proponent;
- a timetable featuring Project milestones;
- an outline of the EIS process;
- the role of the community in the EIS process;
- contact details of the Project team to encourage community input;
- information about the locations and dates of public information sessions;
- details for obtaining a copy of the Project Terms of Reference; and
- a community survey.

A copy of the newsletter is presented in **Appendix D1**.

#### 12.1.2 Advertisements

An advertisement was placed in the Central Queensland News on Wednesday, 4 February and in the "Clermont Rag" community newsletter on Thursday, 29 February 2004. The advertisement included information on the Project and the public information session times and location. The Project freecall number was also featured in the advertisement.

A copy of the advertisement is presented in **Appendix D2**.

#### 12.1.3 Public Information Sessions

Public information sessions were held in Clermont on Friday, 6 and Saturday, 7 February 2004, at the supper room of the Belyando Shire Council office in Clermont. The sessions provided interested community members with an opportunity to have input into the Project study process. Information about the Project and the studies being completed were also displayed at the public information sessions. The display included:

- a poster outlining the value of the EIS process, a description of the EIS process and the Project timeline;

- a poster outlining general information on the Project and EIS, the community's role in the Project and the Project team contact details to encourage further discussion about the Project;
- display plans of the mine at different stages of development;
- a plan of the surrounding area; and
- an overall plan of the Project when fully developed.

RTCA and PB staff were present to discuss concerns about the Project and to provide additional information to participants.

A copy of the display posters are presented in **Appendix D3**.

#### **12.1.4 Community information tools**

A total of four freecall information calls were received by PB during the EIS process. These related to the timing and location of the public information sessions and employment opportunities. No faxes, letters or emails were received during the consultation process.

#### **12.1.5 Groundwater Users Group**

The Groundwater Users Group is made up of landholders who are potentially affected by the dewatering associated with the proposed Project. During consultation with the Groundwater Users Group, RTCA kept the group informed of the Project progress through six information bulletins and four meetings.

#### **Bulletins**

Bulletin one was prepared and distributed to the Groundwater Users Group around early 2002. This bulletin featured information on the evaluation process needed for the Project development and major aspects of the EIS process.

Bulletin two was also prepared and distributed in early 2002. This bulletin featured information on the first stage of the groundwater study process and the type and number of initial studies being conducted.

Bulletin three was prepared and distributed in July 2002. This bulletin included information on the Project background, groundwater processes and initial mine planning. Landholder rights and the RTCA community policy were also outlined.

Bulletin four was prepared and distributed in August 2002. This bulletin advised the Groundwater Users Group of the progress of groundwater studies. The use of groundwater studies in mine planning and management was also outlined.

Bulletin five was prepared and distributed in October 2003. This bulletin featured information on:

- new Project team members;
- the proposed EIS timeframe;
- groundwater studies;
- ownership of the Project;
- the highway deviation and conveyor route;
- the mining lease application process; and
- the general EIS process and the role of the then Department of State Development.

Bulletin six was prepared and distributed in January 2004. This bulletin highlighted that Pacific Coal had changed its name to Rio Tinto Coal Australia. The progress of groundwater modelling and associated consultation was outlined and information on the proposed Project newsletter was also provided.

## **Group Meetings**

RTCA organised a number of meetings with the Groundwater Users Group, between 2002 and 2004. The meetings consisted of a presentation by RTCA and discussion opportunities with the group.

The first meeting held on Wednesday, 17 April 2002, provided an opportunity for the group to discuss issues such as:

- the effect of the proposed Project on groundwater levels in the area;
- groundwater studies and how they will be used in planning and management;
- environmental approvals that are required for the Project;
- the rights of the surrounding landholders potentially affected by dewatering; and
- RTCA's community policy.

A meeting held on Wednesday, 11 September 2002, provided an opportunity for the group and RTCA to discuss:

- the results of the groundwater studies;
- how results were gathered;
- the implications of monitoring results for the Groundwater Users Group and RTCA; and
- groundwater management options.

A meeting held on Wednesday, 8 October 2003, provided an opportunity for the group and RTCA to discuss:

- the status of the Project;
- the conceptual layout of the Project;
- the EIS process; and
- community involvement in the Project.

The most recent meeting held on Monday, 23 February 2004, provided an opportunity for the group and RTCA to discuss:

- the proposed Project timeline;
- the revised layout for the mine,
- recent studies completed for the EIS and the results; and
- the extent of groundwater drawdown on neighbouring properties and proposals to determine the best way for the Proponent to provide alternative supplies if required (i.e. to "make good").

### **12.1.6 Individual Meetings**

Individual meetings were held with members of the Groundwater Users Group and other concerned landholders between March and April 2004. These meetings ensured that concerned landholders could discuss their individual concerns and mitigation strategies with the RTCA study team.

The Clermont Rifle Club was also involved in individual meetings. The purpose of these meetings was to gain an understanding of potential impacts of the Project on the operation of the range and the necessary mitigation strategies.

### **12.1.7 Agency Consultation**

#### **Belyando Shire Council**

RTCA met with Belyando Shire Council on 14 August 2003. The purpose of the meeting was to brief the Council on the progress of the Project. The key topic of discussion was the EIS process and purpose and the use of study information. RTCA met with Belyando Shire Council again on 10 June 2004 to provide a Project update. During this meeting the Council and RTCA agreed to a process of formal dialogue regarding issues such as housing, availability of land, infrastructure and services (water and sewerage), human services, and possible social impacts of the Project.

## **Department of Natural Resources and Mines and Energy (DNRME)**

RTCA held four meetings with the DNRME between 2002 and 2003, to discuss the progress of the Project and related studies. The first meeting was held on 24 June 2002. Subsequent meetings were held on 22 November 2002, 30 October 2003 and 12 December 2003. Issues discussed during the meetings included:

- stock route considerations associated with the highway diversion;
- the results of groundwater studies;
- the supply of make up water to BAM from the existing borefield on the Clermont MLs;
- requirements for a licence to take groundwater; and
- monitoring data and general aquifer characteristics.

## **Department of Main Roads (DMR)**

An initial meeting between DMR and RTCA was held on 17 April 2002. The purpose of this meeting was to brief the DMR on the proposal and to discuss issues and processes. Subsequently, RTCA met with DMR twice, on 6 February 2004 and 16 March 2004. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss the highway deviation. The initial meeting related to the preliminary design of the highway diversion, while the second meeting was held to gain approval for proposed alterations to the design.

## **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**

A meeting was held on 2 June 2004 with EPA's Sustainable Industries Division to discuss potential uses for surplus groundwater from advanced dewatering. Discussion included potential use in irrigation and potential to supplement municipal supplies.

## **12.2 Results**

### **12.2.1 Community Survey and Newsletter**

A total of 56 residents from Clermont responded to the mail survey that was included in the Project newsletter. The survey was designed to gather the different opinions, views and values that participants associated with their local area. In some cases up to 34 different responses were generated from one question.

Participants were asked a number of questions in the survey that were specifically aimed at gaining an understanding of what people value about their area, their different lifestyles and the activities that contributed to those lifestyles.

Responses made by community members as part of the survey have been used in the social impact assessment to describe the population's values and lifestyles. The percentages used in the analysis in the following sections represent the number of participants who noted each issue or aspect, rather than the number of times each issue was raised. Not all of the participants responded to each issue and at times participants did raise more than one issue. Therefore the percentages do not necessarily sum to 100. All but one question on the survey required an unprompted, or 'top of mind' response. Tables listing the most prevalent issues are contained in **Appendix D4**.

### **What the Community Liked About the Area**

Participants were asked to outline what they liked about living in their area. Half of the respondents outlined that they value the friendly people of the area. This was followed by the peace and quiet, the rural atmosphere, and the feeling of safety and low crime in Clermont. To a lesser extent participants also highlighted aspects such as the clean air, the high-quality environment for raising children, and the lack of traffic problems.

### **What the Community Dislikes About the Area**

The community survey also asked respondents to outline what they disliked about the area they lived in. Major aspects of Clermont that respondents disliked included the lack of local services, and the remoteness and isolation of the area. Once again respondents generally had mixed views on what they disliked about the area. Issues of distance, environmental conditions, and lack of variety in opportunities and services dominated the major issues of concern.

## **Relaxation and Recreation**

The question of what participants do for relaxation, and the local areas that they believe are appropriate for recreation elicited a wide variety of responses. Theresa Creek Dam is a popular feature of the local area and participants conducted a number of recreation activities there. Hoods Lagoon is also a popular feature of the local area for relaxation and recreation. Sport in a number of different forms is also considered important to the recreational pursuits of residents in Clermont.

## **Important Features**

Participants also highlighted the important features of their local area. Once again the friendly local people were considered to be an important feature of the Clermont area. Community involvement and support was also considered to be important, the mix of industry in the area and the role of the BAM in the community were other significant aspects of the Clermont area. Other participants highlighted local services, the shopping opportunities, and local schools as important features of the local area.

## **Major Issues Facing the Community**

Important issues facing the local community were also responded to in the survey. The lack of services in the area was of most concern to respondents. Employment opportunities, health care, and education services were also highlighted as important issues. To a lesser extent issues such as drugs and drinking, accommodation for the aged, and road conditions were considered to be significant to the Clermont community.

## **Attributes the Broader Community Should Recognise**

A number of participants did not respond to the question of what attributes the Clermont community would like the broader community to recognise. This may have been due to the similarity of the question to previous questions about local features and what people like about their area. However, those that responded highlighted a number of attributes that they would like the broader community to be aware of. This included the tourism potential of the area and sporting features and opportunities of the area, the mix of industries, and the local businesses and services in the area. This final aspect differed to the view put forward in previous responses where participants stated that they disliked the lack of services and facilities.

## **General Thoughts on the Project**

When asked for general thoughts about the project, over half of the respondents indicated that they thought the development of the Project would be a positive outcome. Respondents also highlighted that the development would be good for the local community and the economy. Concerns about potential negative impacts of the Project, such as groundwater impacts, were also raised. Other respondents outlined that the development would be good if members of the workforce lived in the area and the population expanded.

## **Affect of the Highway Diversions**

Almost half of the survey respondents indicated that the diversion of the Peak Downs Highway and the Gregory Highway would not affect them. A further 34% of respondents thought that it would be a minor inconvenience, while 7% indicated that it would be a major inconvenience. Some respondents elaborated on their concerns and cited issues such as increased travel times and cost as a reason for the inconvenience.

## **Impact on the Community**

Respondents were asked to outline what they thought the impacts of the Project development would be on their community. More than a third of all respondents defined the possible impacts as positive, and 25% indicated that they thought the Project would mean an increase in population. Opportunities for economic development were also seen as a possible outcome for the community. Some participants indicated that they thought that mine employees should live in Clermont to ensure benefits for the local area. Other respondents indicated that the development of the Project would invigorate and sustain the Clermont community into the future.

### **Impact on the Environment**

Almost a third of all respondents to the community survey stated that the mine would have minimal impacts with proper environmental management in place. Others indicated that the mine development would have nil or negligible impacts on the environment. Some participants highlighted some negative impacts on the environment, which included impacts on groundwater, surface water and vegetation.

### **Impact on Cultural Heritage Values**

A number of participants did not respond to the question of impacts on cultural heritage. The remaining 71% of respondents, who did address the question, indicated that the Project would not change cultural heritage and a further 11% stated that they were not sure whether the mine would have an impact. Other respondents stated that the mine would be an improvement to the cultural heritage of the area.

### **Impact on Employment Opportunities**

When asked how the mine would influence employment opportunities a third of participants indicated that the mine would provide employment opportunities and another 32% highlighted that employment opportunities may exist for local people. Respondents also thought development of the Clermont Coal Mine Project would increase opportunities for young people. A further 5% of participants thought that employment would decline over time.

### **Impact on the Local Economy**

The majority of respondents indicated that the Project development would bring about improvements or even a boom in the local economy. Other respondents stipulated that in order to gain economic development in the area, the mine workforce would need to spend money in the local area.

### **Impact on Local Housing**

When asked how the Project would impact housing in the Clermont area, 18% of participants thought that it would bring about positive changes in the Clermont housing market. Other respondents thought the Project would mean an increase in house prices and existing vacant local housing would become filled. Each of these responses equated to 12% of respondents. Some participants highlighted that available housing in the area may not meet future demands (7%), while others outlined that more accommodation may have to be built (7%). A further 12% of respondents did not provide a response to this question.

### **Impact on Lifestyle**

Over half of all respondents indicated that the Project development would lead to an improvement in lifestyle. Other respondents thought that the Project would not mean a change in their lifestyle. The need to improve local facilities to keep up with changes in the community and the need for RTCA contributions were also highlighted by respondents.

### **Impact on Services**

When asked about services in the local area and the possible impact of the Project, respondents indicated that the Project development would lead to an improvement (53%). Other respondents indicated that there would be no change (7%), while others considered the provision of improved services as important issues. The perceived improvements in service provision and lifestyle appear to be linked.

### **Impact on You and Your Family**

The final question of the survey related to how respondents thought the Project would impact them and their family. A total of 27% of respondents thought the Project development would not make a difference to them. Others thought that it would mean an improvement, while some (7%) indicated that the Project would be positive for the community as a whole. A further 11% of respondents did not respond. Finally, respondents also indicated that the impact of the mine on them would depend on employment opportunities (7%).

### 12.2.2 Public Information Sessions

During the two day public information session period a total of 36 community members attended.

Generally, participants at the public information session indicated that the Project would provide a positive outcome for their area. However participants could identify some issues relating to the development of the Project. These concerns generally related to groundwater.

Major issues raised during the public information sessions related to:

- possible impacts on groundwater;
- how groundwater impacts are being monitored
- the diversion of the highways and how they would impact travel time and costs;
- safety concerns about the highway diversions;
- the existing issue of rural depopulation and its impact on Clermont;
- possible positive outcomes for the local community from the Project development; and
- opportunities for local people that may result from the mine development.

A detailed summary of the issues raised during the public information sessions is contained in **Appendix D5**.

### 12.2.3 Groundwater Users Group

During the consultation process conducted by RTCA with the Groundwater Users Group, a number of issues were raised by the potentially affected landholders. These issues included:

- the possible loss of primary bores and/or groundwater supply as a result of the Project development;
- general concerns about the effect of advance dewatering and aquifer drawdown on bores on neighbouring properties;
- the effects of the current licensed extraction of water from the existing borefield on the Clermont Mining Leases to supply water to the BAM;
- the reliability of groundwater monitoring and predictions;
- actions that may result if bores do dry up;
- the ability of the Proponent to "make good" on any water loss;
- the timing of "making good" on groundwater loss;
- how volumes of water supplied under "make good" provisions are determined by the Proponent and how long it will be available;
- the security of "make good" provisions in the event that the Proponent sells the mine or becomes insolvent;
- the ability to use excess water from advance dewatering activities at the site;
- possible impact of noise on residences;
- impact of dust on local residents and agricultural crops as a result of mine blasting;
- impacts of coal dust as a corrosive agent on existing structures;
- concerns about the visual amenity of the mine;
- potential vibration impacts;
- possible loss of local wildlife in the region;
- impact on access from the proposed highway diversions; and
- increased travel times for local residents and school children.

### 12.2.4 Individual Meetings

For the purposes of this EIS, landholders who participated in individual meetings have been designated a number, so they cannot be identified. This has been done to protect the confidentiality and sensitivity of some discussions that have occurred. **Table 12-1** outlines the major issues outlined by each landholder.

**Table 12-1 Landholder issues**

<b>Landholder number</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1	Property devaluation. Groundwater impacts. Dust, noise, blast vibration and visual impacts from the mine. The possibility of relocating house to reduce noise and vibration impacts.
2	Management of groundwater impacts. Impact of the highway diversions on property. The need to change highway designs to minimise impacts.
3	Possible impacts on groundwater. Affect of noise, dust, visual impacts on residences. Use of vegetation to screen visual impacts of the mine. Impact of blasting on older residences on the property. Preservation of local flora and fauna.
4	Impact of groundwater drawdown on the property. Concerned about the increase in travel distance resulting from the highway diversions. Increased travel times for local school children who use the school bus.
5	No concerns.
6	Noise, dust and visual impacts of the mine. Corrosive nature of coal dust on equipment and buildings. Impact of coal dust on crops planted in the vicinity of the mine.
7	Changes in groundwater levels and how that will impact bores.
8	Impacts of the mine location on Rifle Club activities.
9	Concern about impacts on groundwater levels.
10	Agreement and discussions regarding access to land for Project related infrastructure.
11	Concern about impacts on groundwater levels.
12	No concerns.
13	Possibilities for water monitoring. The possibility of using excess water for irrigation.
14	Possibilities for water monitoring.