

# Bulga Complex News

Bulga Complex Newsletter  
November 2011, Issue no. 4



## News from the open cut

Bulga Coal has mined around seven million tonnes in 2011 mainly from the Bulga and Southern Extension Pits. Rehabilitation of 50 hectares of overburden emplacement has commenced this month and will be seeded prior to Christmas. A program of aerial seeding has recently been completed, which will enable Bulga to vegetate some overburden prior to permanent rehabilitation. A significant rehabilitation program is planned for next year which includes rehabilitation of mined areas, and temporary rehabilitation on exposed areas to suppress dust and visual mitigation.

## Broke Fair – great family fun

Well done to Terry Everett and the Broke Fair Committee for another successful fair held in September. The Bulga Complex is a major sponsor of the Fair and provides financial support in the form of marquees, chairs, toilets and hay bales. The Bulga Coal / Beltana tent proved to be popular with the giveaway of 1,500 native trees and balloons. The mine tours were also a big hit with full buses for each tour. Around 300 people were bussed through the mine site so that visitors could check out a working open cut mine. Bulga Coal Environment and Community Superintendent Paul Amidy commented that many Bulga Coal employees brought their families along to show them where they worked. "The employees enjoyed showing their families where they work and for the families, it was a great opportunity to understand what their mum / dad / partner do every day," Paul said.



Real time dust monitor at Putty Road, Bulga.

## Introducing real time dust monitors

Dust from the operation has been identified as a key issue for community members. As part of our ongoing efforts to reduce dust emissions, Bulga Coal is installing four real time dust monitors around Bulga and Broke.

The monitors are being installed in November in three locations – Cobcroft Road, Putty Road Bulga and on mine owned land on Broke Road. A fourth monitor will be located in the village of Broke, its exact location is yet to be finalised. This monitor, once installed, will continuously measure particles sizes PM10 and PM2.5. PM10 is particulate matter 10 micrometers or less in diameter, PM2.5 is

particulate matter 2.5 micrometers or less in diameter, and generally described as fine particles.

### Dust surveillance

Early warning dust monitoring units and video cameras are also going to be installed within and close to the mine. These units and surveillance cameras will be monitored by mine personnel who will then prioritise water carts and modify the operations if necessary, to minimise the dust generated.

For more information on dust management or dust monitoring results at the Bulga Coal Complex, visit our website at [www.bulgacoal.com.au](http://www.bulgacoal.com.au)

## Optimisation Project update

The Bulga Coal Optimisation Project team will continue community and stakeholder consultation in early 2012. The Optimisation Project aims to ensure the continuation of surface operations at Bulga Coal until around 2035. Landholder visits, focus groups and community information sessions will be held in February.

If you would like further information about the Bulga Coal Optimisation Project, please call Bret Jenkins on 6570 2923 or Ralph Northey on 6570 2968.

Coakes Consulting has commenced *Our Villages Our Vision* project, which aims to develop the community's vision for Broke and Bulga by identifying what each community values most and the community's common views for the future.

If you would like more information about the Visioning Project, please contact Ashlee from Coakes Consulting on 4933 2188 or email [enquiries@coakesconsulting.com](mailto:enquiries@coakesconsulting.com).

## Broke Fordwich's history

Around four years ago Broke resident Helen Sharrock approached Ralph Northey of the Bulga Complex asking for assistance for a heritage trail in Broke. After reading *1788 – The First Fleet* history and hearing stories from long time locals Ted McInerney, Muriel Bird and Joan McNamara, Mr Northey, with the support of Xstrata Coal decided to produce a written history that would include research and oral interviews from long time local families. After a lengthy search for a suitable historian, Rosemary Melville and Anne Dunne from Newcastle embarked on the project in 2009. So, while we know it is taking longer than we anticipated, the *History of Broke Fordwich* is currently being designed. Thank you for your patience – we can't wait to receive the final printed books in the coming months. Here is a sneak peek:

### Bushrangers

The isolation of rural inns left them vulnerable to attack from bushrangers who were causing havoc in the Hunter during the 1840s. In 1843 the 16 year old son

of the publican of the Broke Inn was held up by armed bushrangers. The Maitland Mercury reported on the incident on 29 April, 1843:

*...one of the ruffians struck him a severe blow on the head with a stick, which felled him to the ground, and leaving him senseless, and weltering in his blood, they proceeded to ransack the premises. They had succeeded in abstracting the sum of £50, in notes, principally of the Commercial Bank, from the cash-box of the proprietor, and having supplied themselves with fire-arms were about to depart, when the arrival of the landlord from a shooting excursion detained them a short period for deliberation in the hall of the premises. On observing the condition of his son by the aid of a lamp-light over the entrance, he presented his gun and snapped the locks, which by some strange fatality refused their duty, and enabled these marauders to proceed on their retreat without further molestation.*

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## News from Bulga Underground Operations

Beltana Highwall Mining Pty Ltd has changed its name to Bulga Underground Operations Pty Limited. The name change reflects the different operations which include Beltana, Blakefield South and Blakefield North.

Development mining has recommenced at the Blakefield South operation in longwall panel 2 after the effective sealing of longwall panel 1 from the rest of the mine. The development crews are continuing to build the roadways and associated services (power, water, air, conveyors) required for longwall mining. It is expected that the employees that were deployed to other sites after the fire in January will be back at Blakefield South at the end of November. You can read more about the recovery of longwall panel 1 below.

## Mines rescue recovery

Between 2–3 teams of Mines Rescue members head underground each day. The team is made up of six Mines Rescue brigade members from Blakefield South and other mine sites around NSW. Due to the inert atmosphere of the zones they are inspecting (around 0.5% oxygen), each team member wears a closed circuit breathing apparatus called a BG4. Weighing 14.8kg, the suit has a CO<sub>2</sub> absorber that removes carbon dioxide from the exhaled air. At the same time the breathing air is enriched with O<sub>2</sub> from an oxygen cylinder and cooled by flowing through the air cooler.

Although the suits can be worn for up to four hours, each shift at Blakefield is 1.5 hours long. The underground temperature is 26 degrees, however with almost 100% humidity and a completely still atmosphere, body temperature can rise quickly. Team members are thoroughly hydrated before their shift commences using Hydrolite drinks and a 'skin' suit is worn underneath their clothes to help regulate body temperature.



Stringent testing of the BG4 units is undertaken before and after use.



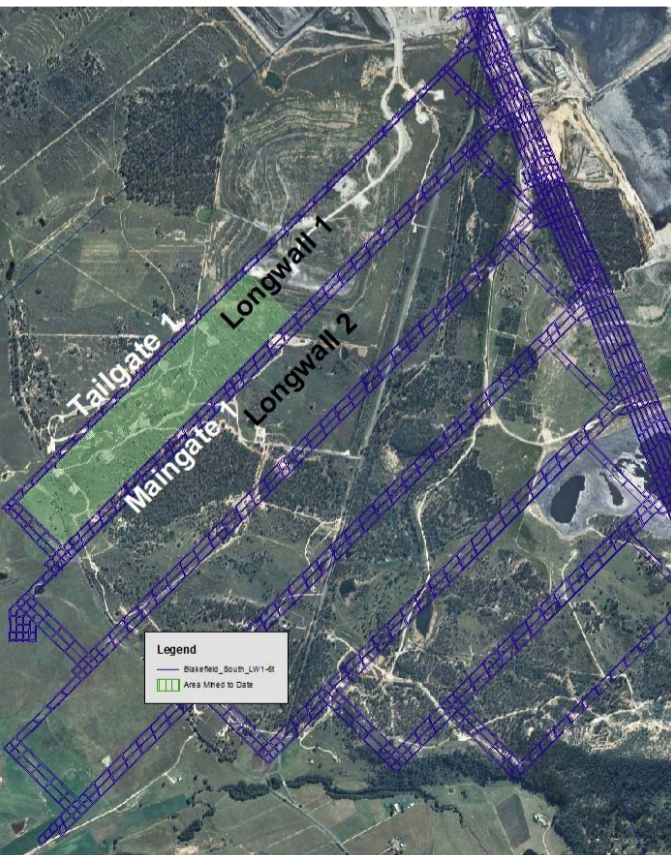
Mines Rescue team preparing to enter longwall 1.

## Longwall recovery operations

The maingate and tailgate roadways of longwall panel 1 are being inspected by the Mines Rescue team, with positive results to date. The roadways have been divided into zones of around 500 metres in length, and each zone is reventilated as it is deemed safe to do so by mine management.

The Mines Rescue teams will continue to work towards the end of the longwall panel which they expect to reach around Christmas time. The reventilation and restoration of the maingate roadway in longwall panel 1 is an essential step before longwall mining can re-commence in longwall panel 2, which is planned for the first half of 2012.

A new longwall face is currently being sourced.



## Gas drainage update

Bulga Underground Operations is continuing its gas drainage activities at the Blakefield South Mine. Removing the gas from the coal prior to mining is crucial to the safety of underground employees. Gas that is not drained from the coal prior to mining can cause a safety hazard as well as delays in production. Post drainage is also undertaken to remove the methane that accumulates in the goaf (the area behind the longwall).

### Gas wells on private property

Most of the gas wells in our gas drainage program have been installed on mine-owned land. However, Bulga Underground Operations now has a need to construct wells on two private properties, one on Charlton Road, the other on Cessnock Road. This infrastructure includes wells, access roads, powerlines and buried pipes. Land access agreements are in place with the landholders.

Visual screening and noise controls will be used during the construction phases, with long-term screening options being developed with the assistance of landscape architects.

The coal seam water drawn from the gas wells is used within the mine's water system. This water is used in coal

washing and for dust suppression on coal stockpiles and haul roads. Gas drainage wells and longwall mining at Bulga Underground Operations are not undertaken under or within the Wollombi Brook or Monkey Place Creek alluvial aquifers.

Bulga Underground Operations has commenced construction on the 9MW first stage of a power plant that will generate electricity from the methane gas. The 9MW power station is expected to be operational mid-2012 and the power will be used onsite.



Noise and visual screening of a gas well on private property near Charlton Road.

## River Red Gum community planted on 26 hectares

The River Red Gum once graced the banks of the Wollombi Brook and Monkey Place Creek. There are now only a handful of these majestic trees left in the Broke area.

Take an endangered tree species, some fertile land by the banks of the Wollombi Brook and add a desire to restore the banks of the Wollombi Brook to its former glory.



Stage 1 River Red Gum community planted in 2009.

The result? 26 hectares of a restored River Red Gum ecological community at Fordwich. It began with seed collection from the existing red gums in the area. The seeds were propagated in a nursery and in winter 2009, the river red gums were planted as tube stock near the river bank. Around 2,000 shrubs and trees were planted in total to create the River Red Gum ecological community.

This stage of planting was followed by Stage 2 in 2010 after the observed initial success of the first plantings. Stages 3 and 4 were completed in winter 2011 to supplement the existing stages and promote habitat connectivity. This community is consistent with Hunter Floodplain River Red Gum Woodland. Around 8,000 trees and shrubs have been planted in total at Fordwich. Broke Fordwich has a young and thriving River Red Gum community to be proud of.

### For further information contact:

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### Xstrata's commitment to Sustainable Development

We are committed to the goal of sustainable development. We balance social, environmental and economic considerations in how we manage our business. We believe that operating to leading standards of health, safety and environmental management, contributing to the development of sustainable communities, and engaging with our stakeholders in two-way, open dialogue, regardless of our location, enhances our corporate reputation and is a source of competitive advantage. This enables us to gain access to new resources, maintain a licence to operate, attract and retain the best people, access diverse and low-cost sources of capital, identify and act upon business opportunities, and optimise our management of risks.