

CABINET MINUTE

BRISBANE, 12 / 12 / 1988

DECISION NO.

55778

SUBJECT:

Surfact Subsidence - Collingwood Park, Redbank.

(Submission No. 50280)

Copies Received at

8.00

a.m.
p.m.

12 / 12 / 1988

Mr. Tenni

Copies
made

29

CIRCULATION DETAILS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L
C A B I N E T M I N U T E
Brisbane, 12th December, 1988
Decision No. 55778

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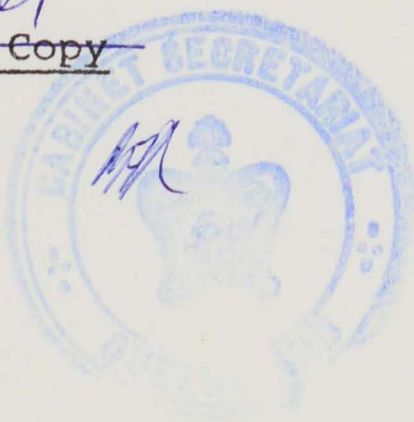
TITLE: Surface Subsidence - Collingwood
Park, Redbank.

CABINET decided:-

That the action taken by the Department of Mines in this matter be endorsed and that appropriate expenditure be authorised if it is necessary, to assist persons who may be forced to vacate their residences.

CIRCULATION: Department of Mines and copy to Minister.
Premier's Department and copy to Premier and Treasurer.
Treasury Department and copy to Minister.
All other Ministers for perusal and return.

Carel
Certified True Copy



B. F. Richards
A/Secretary to Cabinet.



50280

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION "C" - CONFIDENTIAL

Submission No.

21

Copy No.

FOR CABINET

SURFACE SUBSIDENCE - COLLINGWOOD PARK, REDBANK

1. On Wednesday 7th December, 1988, the Chief Inspector of Coal Mines was advised by Dr D. McConachie, geomechanical engineer, of Hollingsworth Consultants that he had identified tension cracks and a compression ridge crossing Lawrie Drive at Collingwood Park near Redbank.
2. Dr McConachie had been invited to inspect the area on behalf of the Ipswich City Council and Worcoll Holdings because of the reported road damage. Worcoll Holdings were the original developers of the Collingwood Park housing estate.
3. The Acting Senior Inspector of Mines from Ipswich inspected the area with Dr McConachie and reported that in their opinion ground movement which resulted in cracks and ridges in roadway pavements, kerbing, concrete driveways and around houses resulted from subsidence associated with the workings of the abandoned Westfalen No. 3 Colliery.
4. Westfalen No. 3 Colliery commenced operations in 1967 and developed towards the east under rural land part of which was rezoned as Residential 1 land in 1976 and was progressively developed as Collingwood Park by Worcoll Holdings.
5. The coal beneath the Lawrie Drive, McBay Street area of Collingwood Park was mined during 1977-1978. In this location the workings are between 85 and 115 metres vertically beneath the surface. The workings averaged 8 metres in height.
6. Westfalen No. 3 Mine ceased production in June, 1987 and the access tunnel and ventilation shaft are sealed at the surface.
7. Mining Lease 568 Ipswich covers the area in which Lawrie Drive and McBay Street are located. The lease was granted to Westfalen Collieries in 1967 but was transferred to Showa Coal Australia Pty Ltd and Rhonvale Pty Ltd on 18th July, 1988. The lease contains conditions which stipulate the maximum percentage extraction of coal which can be made beneath roads or buildings. From examination of plans it would seem that extraction limits have not been exceeded.
8. Because of concern for the welfare of property owners, representatives of the Department of Mines, Ipswich City Council and Rhonvale met on the 8th December to determine what action could be undertaken to best maintain the safety of individuals and property. All actions were accepted as not prejudicing the legal position of any of the participants.

9. Reports received at the meeting indicated that generally lateral movement of the ground was continuing and that one residence in Lawrie Drive had sustained cracking of brickwork and the movement of cement paths. Four other residences and a church exhibited cracking of concrete paths and access drives
10. It was concluded that for the safety of residents it is necessary to monitor ground movements, by survey, and to have buildings surveyed by competent structural engineers and monitored daily in order to be assured of their structural security. The reports of structure surveys will be reviewed by an experienced geomechanical engineer who has the capability of assessing the situation having regard also to ground movements.
11. So that the work of survey, surveillance and assessment could be initiated without delay the Department of Mines has guaranteed the payment of specialists required for this work.
12. A preliminary inspection of the site was made by structural engineers, surveyors and geomechanical engineer on Friday 9th December. The survey of residences is scheduled to commence on Saturday, 10th December and will continue on a daily basis to update information on ground movement and the state of buildings.
13. The parties have established a committee to manage activities. The committee consists of two officers from the Department of Mines, including the Chief Inspector of Coal Mines (Chairman), one representative of Ipswich City Council, one representative of Rhonvale Pty. Ltd. and the geomechanical engineer. Beyond this the Ipswich City Council will maintain liaison with affected property owners and any releases of information will be made by my office.
14. The position with regard to liability of the Department of Mines should damage be caused to buildings by mining operations was examined by G.L. Davies, Q.C. in an opinion given on 20th April, 1976 in which he stated "I cannot conceive of any basis of liability of such Department or of any officer of the Crown". He further stated "It is possible that the holder of the mining tenement could be liable to querist if mining operations caused damage to querist's land or the improvements thereon." In this case the querist was the developer. My Department of Mines has sought an update on this legal position although I have no reason to believe that it should have changed.
15. At this time the Department of Mines has agreed to guarantee the funds to survey buildings and assess results and to continue investigation for the purposes of determining appropriate control measures.

The position must however be recognised that movements could be such that some houses are no longer safe for habitation and accordingly would have to be vacated. This decision will rest with the Ipswich City Council. Concern must then be directed to the needs of those persons forced to vacate and in the initial instance it would seem appropriate for the Government to provide some assistance.

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16. **RECOMMEND -**

Cabinet endorse the action taken by my Department in this matter and authorise appropriate expenditure if it is necessary to assist persons who may be forced to vacate their residences.

MARTIN TENNI
MINISTER FOR MINES AND ENERGY

Brisbane
12th December, 1988.