

MINUTES

Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue Joint Working Group Emissions and Health Meeting

UHMD Resource Centre, Upstairs of the Town Square Shopping Centre
Suite 1, 159 John Street, Singleton NSW 2330

Wednesday 27 June 2018: 2.00 pm to 2:35 pm

In attendance:

John Watson (Chair)	Glencore
Bob Mackie	theresource
Craig Milton	NSW Minerals Council
James Barben	NSW Minerals Council
John Campbell	Bengalla Mining Company
Julie Thomas	Muswellbrook Coal
Matthew Parkinson	AGL
Sarah Roberts	Singleton Council

Apology

Chris Knight	The Bloomfield Group
Genelle Scotts	Bengalla Mining Company
Karen Marler	NSW Environment Protection Authority
Mark Scandrett	Muswellbrook Shire Council
Maryann Crawford	Singleton Council
Neville Hodkinson	Singleton Shire Healthy Environment Group
Ngaire Baker	Mount Pleasant Operation
Sarah Withell	BHP
Wendy Bowman	NSW Mine Watch

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed attendees and noted apologies. Members discussed that there are varying indications from the community regarding increasing air quality that doesn't match a declining level of community interest in Dialogue meeting attendance or engagement on air quality issues.

2. Minutes and actions of the previous meeting

The minutes from the previous meeting were accepted. Mr. Barben provided a brief update on outstanding action items, noting the heritage issue raised by Mr. Hodkinson was discussed at the Joint Advisory Steering Committee, where the JASC recommended a structured format be provided to enable the Dialogue to consider the proposal in more detail. The Chair advised that the remit of the working group has historically tended to be more focused on health issues arising from emissions, rather than from a mental health perspective, and this request might best be considered through another Dialogue Working Group, however would await further advice from Dr. Hodkinson.

3. Strategic Discussion on Dialogue Objectives

The Working Group noted the update provided in the papers.

4. Upper Hunter Air Quality Education Fact Sheets

Mr. Milton provided an update on the air quality education fact sheets, which the working group noted.

5. Update on NSW Government Air Quality Initiatives

Mr. Barben provided an update on key NSW government initiatives. Mr. Barben noted that industry recently met with the EPA and were advised that the government is working in the background on Clean Air, Non-road diesel, and Load-based licencing, and it is expected that proposals on these issues would come back to industry later this year.

The North West Air Quality Monitoring Network is now operational. The Armidale station has been up and running as of April/May 2018, which has delivered some poor results so far.

6. Upper Hunter Air Quality Monitoring Network Update

Mr. Watson provided an overview of the recent UHAQMN results, noting these are usually provided one season behind from when they really should be. However, the recent results are similar to past results, albeit slightly elevated given the dry conditions.

The overall performance of industry is better than the 2013 period, which was the basis for the EPA's forecast work. Mr. Watson noted that there was discussion at a recent UHAQMN meeting on the forecast process, potential PRP's and tonnes moved data. EPA has advised that they are yet to announce how they will progress their forecasting project at this stage, as they are keen to improve accuracy before implementing.

Another issue that arose regarded the reporting of exceedances as per approvals. The definition of an 'extraordinary event' was also raised and members asked OEH how this should be defined. While industry must report exceedances immediately, it may take up to two weeks to determine whether this was an extraordinary event. Mr. Watson advised that Mitch Bennett recently convened a committee meeting with industry, OEH and DPE to create a framework assessment for determining these extraordinary events.

7. Update on communication activities

Mr. Mackie's update on communication activities was noted.

8. Update on current Dialogue projects

Mr. Barben noted recent discussions with Mark Gifford of the EPA, and the government's plan to leverage off Rural Fire Service air quality modelling, that shows similar levels of forecasting that OEH had developed. The RFS modelling is used to predict air quality as a result of backburning operations.

9. Other Business

No other business was discussed.

10. Next Meeting / Meeting Close

The Working Group noted that this is the last separate meeting of the Working Group, and that the emissions and health focus can be easily integrated into the one Environment meeting.

Mr. Barben noted that the Dialogue secretariat would seek updates from the EPA and OEH further in the year regarding these government initiatives.

Mr. Watson noted the lack of community involvement in air quality may be because people are interested and want to help, but don't know what they can offer or how to articulate their concerns. The

controls are managed at a site level rather than any individual buy-in. Mr. Barben noted that the concerns over air quality have also shifted to communications-themed projects.

Members discussed when would be the best time to host meetings and agreed that morning meetings seem to suit more people and that 9:00 am may provide better attendance than meetings over the lunch period. Mr. Milton noted that there is significant consolidation work to bring these two groups together under the Environment Working Group, so there is an opportunity to survey members on their preferences.

Meeting closed at 2:35 pm

No actions created.