

# MINUTES

## NSW Minerals Council

### UHMD – Joint Working Group – Emissions & Health

UMHD Resource Centre, Singleton Town Square Shopping Centre, Singleton

Thursday 24 November 2016: 1.00pm - 4.00pm

---

#### Attending:

John Watson	Glencore (Chair)
Gerard Gleeson	Rio Tinto
James Barben	Yancoal Australia
John Drinan	Singleton Shire Healthy Environment Group
John Hindmarsh	The Bloomfield Group
Julie Thomas	Muswellbrook Coal Company Limited
Matthew Parkinson	AGL - Bayswater Power Station
Melinda Hale	Singleton Council
Neville Hodgkinson	Singleton Shire Healthy Environment Group
Greg Sullivan	NSW Minerals Council
Craig Milton	NSW Minerals Council

#### Guests:

Dr Yvonne Scorgie	Office of Environment & Heritage
Emma Coombs	NSW Environment Protection Authority

#### Apology:

Adam Gilligan	NSW Environment Protection Authority
Digby Short	Yancoal Australia
Sarah Withell	BHP Billiton
Wendy Bowman	NSW Mine Watch

## **1. Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed all members to the meeting and noted the apologies received.

## **2. Minutes from Previous Meeting**

The minutes from the previous meeting were accepted and the progress of action items were noted.

Ms Hale queried why an agenda item relating to air quality education fact sheets had dropped off the action items. This was an error and in light of the school bus tour educational materials currently being developed, will be added back to the action items and discussed at future meetings.

### **ACTION:**

- **Add 'Air Quality Education Fact Sheets' to the action items and table for future discussion.**

## **3. Update on Current Projects**

Mr Milton provided an update on current projects to the JWG.

## **4. Presentation - Air Quality Forecasts for the Upper Hunter**

Dr Yvonne Scorgie presented to the JWG on air quality forecasting with a focus on Sydney. Dr Scorgie advised the information was very technical and scientific and not in the public domain.

Key points raised during discussion regarding the presentations included:

- OEH is reluctant to report poor air quality as this may cause alarm amongst the public.
- Evidence that OEH have gathered suggests that those with respiratory problems prefer an advanced warning rather than the inconvenience of a false alarm.
- Bushfires are quite tricky as they may be small and trigger one station only.
- OEH advised that nightly news air quality predictions are likely to be poorer and only moderately accurate.
- With queried about the recent Melbourne thunderstorm asthma event, OEH advised they do not cover pollen forecasts, however UTS is developing a pollen forecast research project with funding through NHMRC.
- OEH is looking to improve their domain knowledge and implement a statistical forecasting tool prototype. HYSPLIT is a computer model which projects air parcel trajectories has finished Module 1, with module 2 expected to have begun in December 2016 incorporating Access data.
- The next steps for OEH is to focus on sub-regional forecasts (e.g. SW Sydney), develop a statistical Air Quality prototype; and progress with HYSPLIT.
- The JWG is keen to bring this to the Hunter, but OEH advised it would need to be refined to the Hunter's conditions and have up to date emissions data.

Emma Coombs from the EPA presented to the JWD on 'Adverse Weather for Dust Generation', which consists of work focused on reducing dust emissions in the Hunter Valley through best practice measures. Ms Coombs advised of coal benchmarking projects as well as Dust Stop PRP's that have delivered good results of up to 80% reduction in emissions, or 20,000 tonnes p.a.

Ms Coombs was queried on the rolling data displayed and advised that this is a 24 hour average, which is updated hourly and available on the website. Alerts are sent out in the event of an exceedance. There is a monthly quality assurance review of the data. With regards to drifting patterns, it was advised that they can track the movement of air through the valley as there is a daily pattern and can use this data to predict why it is happening.

Ms Coombs advised that there is an adverse weather investigation project focused on the Hunter Valley in

conjunction with OEH seeking to identify the specific set of conditions that cause a bad day. OEH used an example of a significant drop between 2013 and 2016 of 50 to 4 between Merriwa and Singleton. Ningbo Jiang from OEH is currently finalising a report that is seeking to dissect sub regions with very different conditions. OEH believes that more needs to be done to bed down net variables. As the analysis is very detailed, they want to ensure data is as accurate as possible. It was advised that there is no adverse data from recent years (2014 onwards).

Ms Coombs advised that there has been placement of continuous PM10 monitors upwind and downwind of each mine. If there is an exceedence, EPA will look at the mines data in the area and the contribution from each individual mine, contact the mine and address the situation. Dr Scorgie suggested it might be a good idea to have Ningbo Jiang to present at an upcoming meeting.

**Action:**

- NSWMC to secure a presentation on the final report on the adverse weather investigation project for an upcoming JWG - Emissions and Health meeting.

**5. Update on weather forecasting project**

Rio Tinto has volunteered for the project.

**6. Clean Air for NSW Consultation paper**

Mr Milton provided a brief overview of the Hunter Valley-related air quality actions referenced in the Clean Air for NSW paper. Members were pleased to see that following the Dialogue's discussion and advocacy in this area, that the Government has focused

**7. Update on UHMD communications initiatives**

Mr Milton provided an update on the Dialogue's communications initiatives.

Members raised concerns regarding the level of misinformation in the community and the need to address this in the development of educational material. Local councils have reported receiving biased questions that are phrased against the mining industry, with industry members also receiving negative questions.

Mr Sullivan advised that the pilot school bus tour completed on the same day as this meeting had provided an opportunity to test run the idea and subsequently has uncovered numerous other factors that were previously not considered, and will help to enhance the tours. The JASC will receive an update on the school bus tour pilots in 2017.

A phrasing error in the section outlining the school bus tours was alerted to NSWMC. A passage referring to the purpose of the tours mistakenly referred to the 'industry promoting mines'. This is a leftover from an earlier draft and has since been edited out of school bus tour communications materials, as the Dialogue is working to ensure the school bus tour educational materials provide a balance of information acknowledging the challenges and impacts of mining as well as the benefits and opportunities it brings.

**8. 2016 UHMD Annual Forum**

Mr Sullivan provided an update on the Forum, noting the key speakers and topics covered, following a suggestion at the previous Forum workshop to focus on a number of key items in detail rather than attempting to cover everything.

Members were interested in the student workshop and were keen to see the feedback that will be documented and the outcomes provided.

Members queried how many community members had been invited and how the Forum has been promoted. Mr Milton advised that there has been EDM invites sent to all contacts on the Dialogue list, as well as radio spots and targeted invites from Dialogue industry members to their CCC representatives.

#### **9. Update on UHMD Perception Survey project**

Mr Sullivan provided an overview of the survey results. Ruth McLeod, by way of Kari Dahlgren prepared a preliminary summary of results, which was delivered to the JASC at their last meeting. The full summary of results will be delivered at the Forum.

#### **10. General business**

With no other business, the meeting closed at 12:05pm

#### **Actions arising from meeting on 24 November 2016 UHMD Emissions & Health Joint Working Group Meeting**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>2. Minutes from Previous Meeting</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NSWMC Add 'Air Quality Education Fact Sheets' to the action items and table for future discussion</li></ul>	NSWMC	Complete