

MINUTES

Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue Joint Working Group Water and Land Management Meeting

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

Wednesday 28 March 2018: 10.00 am- 1.00 pm

In attendance

Bill Baxter (Chair)	Yancoal
John Campbell	Bengalla Mining Company
Paul Amidy	Glencore
Ken Bray	Hunter Valley Water Users Association
Julie Thomas	Muswellbrook Coal
Neil Griffiths	NSW Department of Primary Industries
Harry Rose	NSW Department of Primary Industries (Observer)
Mark Scandrett	Muswellbrook Shire Council
Monique Meyer	Resources Regulator
Michaela Susan O'Dwyer	NSW Department of Primary Industries
Wendy Bowman	NSW Mine Watch
Chris Knight	The Bloomfield Group
Ron Fenwick	Wambo CCC / Community Individual
Jim Morgan	Wybong Action Group / NSW Farmers' Association
Ron Fenwick	Community Representative (part meeting)
Bob Mackie	theresource
James Barben	NSW Minerals Council

Apology

Karen Marler	NSW Environment Protection Authority
Simon Francis	DPI Water
Nigel Charnock	Glencore
Tim Roberts	Tom Farrell Institute
Merri Bartlett	Peabody Energy
Neil Nelson	Singleton Beef and Land Management Association
Glenda Briggs	NSW Department of Primary Industries
Jo Powells	NSW Department of Primary Industries
Tony Cox	NSW Department of Industry
Cameron Archer	Tom Farrell Institute
Craig Milton	NSW Minerals Council

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed attendees and noted apologies. Mr. Mark Scandrett was welcomed as a new member of the JWG.

2. Minutes and actions of the previous meeting

The minutes were accepted. Mr. Barben provided a brief update on outstanding action items, noting that several are addressed in these papers, or are in progress.

3. Hunter River Water Quality Study

Mr. Barben provided an update on the Hunter River Water Quality Study indicating that the study was being finalised by the University and that members of the steering committee provided comments on a draft report.

4. Water Accounting Framework 2016 results

Mr. Barben provided an overview of the results from the 2016 Water Accounting Framework. The results were similar to prior years and the Working Group advised that it would be important to start collating trends of the data now that several year's worth have been collected.

5. Update on current water projects

Mr. Barben noted that most of the current water projects are addressed in the papers except for the update on the Bioregional Assessment. It was noted that the Bioregional Assessment was available online for one region and the Hunter was expected in mid-2018.

6. Other water business

Mr. Bray provided an update on the water reforms that are currently underway because of the Murray Darling review. It was noted that the reforms are focused on compliance with water licenses and measuring water take.

7. 2017 UHMD Annual Forum

Mr. Barben provided an overview of the outcomes from the 2017 Annual Forum noting the challenge for the UHMD in seeking further community representatives. Generally, the forum was well received, and participants appreciated the updates on the projects.

8. 2018 Strategic Discussion

Mr. Barben provided an update on the outcomes of the JASC and ISC as noted in the papers. Discussion was then had amongst the JWG members regarding their priorities for the UHMD noting the following key points:

Mr. Scandrett advised that he sought more information for the community in relation to air quality and that he would be able to distribute UHMD information through his networks if supplied in an appropriate format. Information on the Water Accounting Framework would also be valuable.

Mr. Morgan noted the importance of focussing on land use after mining but also land use alongside mining as many projects have substantial life spans.

Mr. Morgan advised that the UHMD should try and accommodate schools from outside of the district on mine tours or at least share the training materials. It was noted that there would be some benefit in expanding the program to the Lower Hunter and Newcastle however the constraints around site availability, the already challenging logistics and cost were noted by the JWG.

The JWG discussed the value of mine tourism for the public beyond the school tour program. It was seen to be a long-standing desire of the community and the JWG requested that this be discussed with the JASC.

ACTION

- **UHMD Secretariat to provide Mr. Scandrett with fact sheet style information on Air Quality and the Water Accounting Framework for distribution through Muswellbrook Council networks.**
- **Discuss the possibility of establishing mine tours for the public at the following JASC meeting.**

9. Synoptic Plan Review Update

Mr. Barben provided an update on the Synoptic Plan review noting that little progress had been made

since the UHMD 2017 Annual Forum Workshop. Mr. Barben encouraged UHMD participants to attend the update being provided by the Department of Premier and Cabinet as part of the Coal Festival.

10. Update on communications activities

Mr. Mackie provided an overview of the various communications activities including providing a summary the key findings from the UHMD Community Surveys, with members interested in these findings and how they may be used to improve our engagement. Mr. Griffiths noted that Local Land Services would be a valuable stakeholder in targeted engagement.

Mr. Mackie also provided a brief update on the upcoming Coal Festival events that he is coordinating for the local Business Chambers.

11. DRG Rehabilitation Reform Program update

Ms. Meyer provided an update on reforms within the Department of Planning and Environment with the Environmental Sustainability Unit being transferred to the Resources Regulator bringing a stronger focus on compliance and enforcement activities.

Ms. Meyer also provided an update on the Rehab Reform Program with consultation to commence in mid-April. It was anticipated that the GIS portal would commence on 1 July 2018.

The reforms included changing the Mining Operations Plan from a seven-year plan to a more dynamic three-year plan looking at the final landform trajectory. Failure to make sufficient progress would be met with enforcement actions by the Resources Regulator.

Mr. Morgan expressed concerns that a lot of work has been happening behind the scenes and the details were not getting through to the community.

Discussion was held amongst members regarding the requirements to assess different rehabilitation and land form options through the Environmental Assessment process and Ms. Meyer advised that the standard SEAR's required such assessments to be undertaken. Ms. Meyer advised that if sufficient information on rehabilitation was not provided up front as part of a Development Application then it would be rejected.

Mr. Morgan advised that while the standards might be improving, the public are not seeing these changes and new regulatory requirements. The community is not receiving the information in an accessible and understandable fashion.

Mr. Barben advised that the submissions on the Department of Planning and Environment *Improving Mine Rehabilitation* Discussion Paper were available online.

ACTION

- **A copy of the standard SEAR's to be distributed with these minutes**
- **Invite the Resources Regulator to attend the JWG meeting in Q3 to present on the Rehab Reform Program progress**

12. Rehabilitation reporting 2016 results

Mr. Barben provided an overview of the 2016 rehabilitation reporting results noting the shift in land area from agricultural purposes to biodiversity offsets.

Mr. Scandrett advised that he believed that such a change was made to reduce rateable land area. Mr. Barben noted that this was a result of changes in Government policy for biodiversity offsetting.

13. Update on current land management projects

Mr. Griffiths and Mr. Rose gave an overview of the second phase of their ACARP cattle grazing project and advised that they would soon be seeking data from mining companies and access to sites for their studies. This project is expected to be delivered by Q1 2019.

Mr. Griffiths also advised that their initial paper had been published on the ACARP website, but it was accessible only by paying for the report.

ACTION

- **If possible, distribute the initial cattle grazing study paper and distribute to the JWG.**

14. Other land management business

Mr. Barben provided an update on the Senate Inquiry into mine rehabilitation and the ICMM mine closure workshop.

15. General Dialogue matters

Mr. Bray advised that the Upper Hunter Land Services would be commencing a project on the Hunter River involving a reference group of local stakeholders.

16. Next Meeting / Close

Mr. Baxter advised that he would be stepping down as chair of the JWG to rotate the role. Mr. Barben and the JWG thanked Mr. Baxter for his excellent work in chairing the group. Mr. Barben advised that an applicant for Chair had been received and this would be resolved before the next meeting.

The next meeting dates for 2018 were provided to the working group for reference.

ACTION

- **Determine replacement chair for JWG - Land and Water**

The meeting closed at 12:20 pm

**Actions arising from meeting
UHMD Water Joint Working Group Meeting**

Action	Responsibility	Status
Strategic Discussion		
UHMD Secretariat to provide Mr. Scandrett with fact sheet style information on Air Quality and the Water Accounting Framework for distribution through Muswellbrook Council networks.	UHMD Secretariat	Completed
Discuss the possibility of establishing mine tours for the public at the following JASC meeting.	UHMD Secretariat	Completed
DRG Rehabilitation Reform Program		
A copy of the standard SEAR's to be distributed with these minutes	UHMD Secretariat	Completed
Invite the Resources Regulator to attend the JWG meeting in Q3 to present on the Rehab Reform Program progress	UHMD Secretariat	In progress
Land Management Projects		
If possible, distribute the initial cattle grazing study paper and distribute to the JWG.	UHMD Secretariat	Completed
Next Meeting		
Determine replacement chair for JWG - Land and Water	UHMD Secretariat	Completed