

## 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 11 October 2017: 10.00 am- 1.00 pm

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#### In attendance

Bill Baxter (Chair)	Yancoal
Julie Thomas	Muswellbrook Coal
Hannah Bowe	Bloomfield Group
Dominic Brown	Yancoal
Glenda Briggs	NSW Department of Primary Industries
Melinda Hale	Singleton Council
Cameron Archer	Tom Farrell Institute
Jim Morgan	Wybong Action Group / NSW Farmers Federation
Neil Griffiths	Department of Primary Industries
Catherine Lewis	Division of Resources and Geoscience
Ken Bray	Hunter Valley Water Users Association
Ron Fenwick	Wambo CCC / Community Individual
Julie Fletcher	MACH Energy (Observer)
Bob Mackie	theresource
James Barben	NSW Minerals Council
Craig Milton	NSW Minerals Council

#### Guests

Thava Palanisami	Newcastle Institute for Energy and Resources, UoN
Richard Bush	Newcastle Institute for Energy and Resources, UoN
Dayjil Fincham	Hydro Engineering & Consulting (via teleconference)

#### Apology

Karen Marler	NSW Environment Protection Authority
Dee Murdoch	AECOM
Jo Powells	NSW Department of Primary Industries
Sean Constable	Upper Hunter Shire Council
Simon Francis	DPI Water
Paul Amidy	Glencore
Laurie Perry	Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation
Nigel Charnock	Glencore
Neil Nelson	Singleton Beef and Land Management Association
Leonie Ball	Singleton Beef and Land Management Association
Tim Roberts	Tom Farrell Institute

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#### 1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed attendees and noted apologies. Mr. Barben introduced himself as the new Director, Policy for the NSW Minerals Council, replacing Greg Sullivan and thanked Mr. Sullivan for his work on the Dialogue over several years.

## **2. Minutes and actions of the previous meeting**

The minutes and actions were accepted by members. Mr. Milton provided a brief update on outstanding action items, noting that several actions are addressed in these papers, or are currently in progress.

A discussion on the Synoptic Plan took place, with members advising that the UHMD needs to be very focused on what we want from this particular plan, as there is a risk that DPC may drift and develop a plan on their own. Members noted that it was important that DPC have a statement from the Dialogue, rather than individual input, as this will stipulate the importance of consultation with the community.

### **ACTION:**

- **UHMD Secretariat to capture key community concerns with the Synoptic Plan to provide to the Department of Premier & Cabinet.**

## **3. Presentation: Neil Griffiths, *Upper Hunter Grazing Study - Key Findings and Future Research***

Mr. Griffiths provided a detailed overview of the key findings of the cattle grazing study. The presentation was well received by members and generated significant discussion. Mr. Griffiths noted that because of the way the study was purposely managed, it is difficult to apply statistics. As such, there are limitations to the wider application of the key findings. However, it does provide some key discussion points, and the follow-on proposal, if successful will look to expand on these findings.

Mr. Griffiths noted the high level of industry commitment for both the grazing study, and the current ACARP proposal being considered.

The final report of the grazing study has been submitted to ACARP, which features many of the graphs contained in the presentation today. Mr. Griffiths will be presenting to the 2017 Forum on this topic, with a simpler presentation.

## **4. Rehabilitation Reporting & Principles Project**

Mr. Milton provided a brief overview of the 2016 rehabilitation reporting figures for Dialogue members, noting that these preliminary figures are close to being finalised, and will be reviewed internally and distributed to the Industry Steering Committee for a final review before publishing.

## **5. Rehabilitation and Mine Closure Update**

Mr. Milton provided an update on the Senate Inquiry into mine rehabilitation, noting that the reporting date will be delayed until Autumn 2018.

Mr. Barben provided an overview of the successful ICMM Mine Closure Workshop, held in the Hunter in August 2017, noting it was a great opportunity to promote the projects of the Dialogue. Members asked whether there were any learnings or outcomes from the workshop that may be shared with the wider Dialogue community. The Chair advised that he received some communication from ICMM following the workshop and would send through to the UHMD secretariat to consider distributing to members.

### **ACTION:**

- **Mr. Baxter to send post-workshop ICMM Mine Closure communications to the UHMD secretariat to review and distribute information to members where relevant.**

## **6. Update on current Dialogue Land Management Projects**

Mr. Barben provided an update on other projects not previously captured in the agenda.

With regards to the Voids research project that Ms. Fincham is currently finalising, members queried what the UHMD will be doing with the information collected. Mr. Barben advised that the Rehabilitation and Mine Closure Working Group is looking at voids from an industry perspective and is progressing with fact sheets as part of the Beneficial Reuse of Voids project.

Mr. Barben noted that the main challenge for the Upper Hunter is that there is no void currently available for closure to establish a baseline of information. Members noted that while there is work being done by

NSWMC, it is not necessarily seen by the community and that there needs to be more effort put into influencing the Government and Planning Department improvement documents mechanisms that are more amenable to community expectations.

Mr. Barben noted that the Annual Forum would be a good opportunity to raise many of these points. Members agreed that Ms. Fincham's research should provide some guidance which will help develop a regional vision.

#### **7. Other business - Land Management**

No other business was discussed.

#### **8. Synoptic Plan Review Update**

Mr. Barben provided an overview of the Synoptic Plan Review process and noted that they are yet to make huge inroads in developing content but are working to ensure they stay on the right track. Mr. Barben advised the discussion session at the Annual Forum would be a great opportunity to assess the work being undertaken and provide comment from the Dialogue collectively on the future direction.

The Chair advised that DRG is currently working with industry to pull together a lot of the data and information identified by the community in a more dynamic format, including rehabilitation GIS data, which Ms. Lewis confirmed had quite a wide uptake so far, even in voluntary phase.

#### **9. School Mine Tours Program**

Mr. Mackie provided a brief overview of the School Mine Tours Program and advised that the first run of tours would be commencing in the coming weeks with Year 9 students from Singleton High School. All schools in the region are involved except for two, which has been a great level of engagement. Members queried the format of the tours and what they involved. Mr. Mackie advised they are all to be roughly 2 hours in length including travel to and from site, with students able to see the complete mining process on site from an unbiased viewpoint. Students will be able to take photos and are required to complete worksheets as part of this education module.

Members discussed the value of the program and noted that there really needs to be a take home message that kids can provide to their families for this program to have real impacts.

#### **10. 2017 UHMD Annual Forum**

Mr. Barben provided an update on the Forum agenda noting that this has been finalised and provides many opportunities for community feedback. A suggestion from the Industry Working Group was to provide some pre-reading material to attendees so that they can prepare themselves for discussion and stimulate some thinking, and to also set some parameters for what will be discussed, so the sessions can be managed easily.

#### **11. Beneficial Reuse of Voids Fact Sheets**

Mr. Milton provided an update on the Beneficial Reuse of Voids project fact sheets and noted there was a limited opportunity to provide feedback on the sheets, and that comments would need to be provided as soon as possible.

#### **12. Update on communications activities**

Mr. Mackie provided an overview of the various communications activities the UHMD is undertaking. Mr. Milton summarised the key findings from the UHMD Community Surveys, with members interested in these findings and how they may be used to improve our engagement. Members encouraged breaking down the rehabilitation question into more specific points that the community is interested in. Members were also keen to see the sentiments of those inside the area and outside the area.

#### **13. Presentation: Professor Richard Bush & Dr. Thava Palanisani, *Hunter River Water Quality Study***

Professor Bush and Dr. Palanisani presented to the working group on the key findings of the water

quality study and thanked all industry personnel and community members involved in the study. Prof. Bush explained the parameters of the study noting that it aligns with government testing sites and has received independent laboratory analysis. The results have shown that nothing met or exceeded water quality guidelines and that water in the storage sites are equivalent to that contained in the river. There are elevated levels of certain metals which are indicative of the areas sampled being close to mines and power stations, but these are nowhere near levels that pose any risk to health.

Members were pleased with the findings and questioned exactly what would be reported, as salinity levels and spatial data would be helpful. Prof. Bush advised he is still pulling together the report and undertaking statistical analysis of the data. Members suggested a simple fact sheet in layman's terms would be beneficial, and Prof. Bush advised he would be happy to provide this.

**ACTION:**

- **UHMD secretariat to present preliminary findings data to the JWG for reference.**
- **UHMD secretariat to liaise with Prof. Bush to determine how the key findings could be included in a fact sheet.**

**14. Presentation: Dayjil Fincham, *Water Accounting Framework - Preliminary Results for 2016***

Ms. Fincham joined the working group to provide a snapshot of the preliminary findings from the 2016 collection of industry data.

Ms. Fincham advised that there is not too much change in the mine site data and generally no major outliers of inputs or outputs for 2016. The only note that Ms. Fincham provided was that the reuse efficiency had gone down to 47% from 50% in 2016, which is likely attributed to an increase in rainfall that year.

The Chair advised that members at previous working groups were keen to see trending data incorporated where relevant. Ms. Fincham advised that we can make a start on this, however, there's likely to not be a great deal we can take from the 3 years of data so far.

Ms. Fincham advised there was a comparable discharge amount this year to 2015, which still equated to less than 1% of the total water in the Hunter River system.

**15. Update on other Dialogue water projects**

Mr. Barben provided a brief update on the bioregional assessments programme, with members querying their wider applicability. Mr. Barben advised that the only mandate from the government agencies involved is to provide the assessments at this stage.

**16. Other business**

Ms. Hale advised the working group that Singleton Council is forming a Weeds Advisory Committee to respond to criticism levelled at Council and are looking for participation from local mines to join local land care groups. Ms. Hale will contact Dialogue contacts from each mine in the Singleton LGA shortly.

**17. Next meeting / Meeting close**

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

**The meeting closed at 1:15 pm**

**Actions arising from meeting on 17 October 2017  
UHMD Water Joint Working Group Meeting**

Action	Responsibility	Status
<b>Synoptic Plan Review Update</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UHMD Secretariat to capture key community concerns with the Synoptic Plan to provide to the Department of Premier &amp; Cabinet.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note: Summary document prepared.</b></p>	<b>UHMD Secretariat</b>	<b>In progress</b>
<b>Rehabilitation and Mine Closure Update</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Baxter to send post-workshop ICMM Mine Closure communications to the UHMD secretariat to review and distribute information to members where relevant.</li> </ul>	<b>Mr. Baxter</b>	<b>Completed</b>
<b>Hunter River Water Quality Study</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UHMD secretariat to present preliminary findings data to the JWG for reference.</li> </ul>	<b>UHMD Secretariat</b>	<b>Completed</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UHMD secretariat to liaise with Prof. Bush to determine how the key findings could be included in a fact sheet.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note: Engagement with Prof. Bush is ongoing as the report is being finalised.</b></p>	<b>UHMD Secretariat</b>	<b>In progress</b>