

MINUTES

NSW Minerals Council UHMD – Joint Working Group – Water and Land Management UMHD Resource Centre, Singleton Town Square Shopping Centre, Singleton

Wednesday 15 March 2017: 2.00pm - 4.00pm

Present

Bill Baxter (Chair)	Rio Tinto
Matt Parkinson	Bayswater Power Station
Andrew Darnell	BHP Billiton
Greg Woodward	Community Individual
Paul Amidy	Glencore
Ken Bray	Hunter Valley Water Users Association
Simon Turpin	Local Land Services - Hunter
Julie Thomas	Muswellbrook Coal Company
Neil Griffiths	NSW Department of Primary Industries
John Trotter	NSW Department of Trade and Investment
Karen Marler	NSW Environment Protection Authority
Wendy Bowman	NSW Mine Watch
Chris New	Rio Tinto
John Hindmarsh	The Bloomfield Group
Professor Tim Roberts	Tom Farrell Institute
Cameron Archer	Tom Farrell Institute
Sean Constable	Upper Hunter Shire Council -
Ron Fenwick	Scone Wambo CCC - Singleton
Jim Morgan	Wybong Action Group
Julie McNaughton	Yancoal Australia
Bob Mackie	the resource
Greg Sullivan	NSW Minerals Council
Craig Milton	NSW Minerals Council
Kari Dahlgren	PhD Candidate (observer)

Apologies

Donna McLaughlin	BHP Billiton
David O'Brien	Glencore
Helen Squires	NSW Department of Primary Industries
Rebekah Gomez-Fort	NSW Department of Primary Industries - Water
Simon Francis	NSW Department of Primary Industries - Water
Matthew Newton	NSW Department of Trade and Investment, DRE
Melinda Hale	Singleton Council
John Drinan	Singleton Shire Healthy Environment Group
Chris Quinn	The Bloomfield Group

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed attendees and noted apologies. The Chair acknowledged Dr John Drinan who was due to attend these JWG meetings as his final contribution to the Dialogue. The Chair read a prepared statement from Dr Drinan.

2. Minutes and actions of the previous meeting - Land Management

The minutes for the 11 May 2016 meeting were confirmed and an update on the action items was provided.

3. Grazing Trials

Mr Griffiths provided an overview of the grazing trials and an update on recent results that showed cattle on rehabilitated mined land had from 500g to 750g average advantage on those from analogue sites. The existing monitoring under the ACARP project ends mid 2017, with some trials extending beyond this time, which will require further monitoring.

Mr Griffiths advised that DPI has been discussing a number of potential ongoing projects in three broader areas, including:

*Better cattle production and what can we do with existing rehabilitated sites to increase production and results (e.g. fertilizers, better grazing management).

*A desktop review looking at knowledge sharing of grazing rehab methods to determine best utilisation of agricultural land use - what has worked and what hasn't.

*What practices are used in rehab in terms of pasture varieties and biosolids - more detailed and specific examination.

Mr Griffiths was questioned whether it was worth expanding the study to other mine sites. Mr Griffith advised that while it would be a good thing to carry on, there are issues to overcome in terms of scale and replicating the study.

Some members were concerned about the release of toxic minerals from the substrata and how this might impact on the land long-term. The Chair advised that blood sampling was incorporated into the grazing manuals which would highlight any contaminants, although blood sampling has been criticised due to animal welfare issues. There has also been reasonable pasture sampling across pastures including a heavy metals sweep. The Chair also advised that mine sites undertake some testing of mine spoil before applying compost so have some idea of heavy metal levels from these tests.

There was some member concern over the current ACARP trial not providing a full assessment of the suitability of the land for grazing given its relatively short duration. However, within the constraints of the trial, and with the guidance of the project advisory committee the project has delivered on its key outcomes to date and the results are positive.

Members are encouraged to provide feedback to Mr Griffith or the UHMD Secretariat.

4. Rehabilitation Reporting project

Mr Milton provided an overview of the project and advised that the 2015 results have been finalised after a query had been addressed.

The Chair noted that even though some sites are no longer Dialogue members or have ceased production, they are still required to undertake reporting on their rehabilitation progress, and as such will have most of the key information publicly available (excluding offsets and agricultural use data). Some sites also have different reporting periods (calendar/financial year), but this should not matter as long as it is a regular 12 month snapshot.

The Working Group discussed the 'G' figure of overall rehabilitation to disturbance, noting that it will be difficult to shift as it measures cumulative impacts., rather than 'F' which measure the annual impact only. It was suggested that the table needs qualification and that mines should be listed which were taken into account.

Mr Sullivan advised that DRE is developing a digital tool to display rehabilitation progression over time. In the program, users will be able to select a site and see photos and simulation of rehab that has been completed and expected in the future. DRE will likely be very supportive of the Dialogue project and it was suggested that the Dialogue could benefit from a presentation from DRE.

ACTIONS:

- **UHMD secretariat to invite David Blackmore at DRE to present on the rehabilitation digital tool and rehabilitation reform program.**

5. Mine rehabilitation booklet

Mr Milton provided an update on the DRE and NSWMC collaborative booklet. Mr Sullivan advised that the booklet has gone to the Minister's office and will hopefully be distributed soon.

6. Update on current Land Management projects

The current projects were noted.

7. Other business - Land Management

No other business was noted.

8. UHMD 2017 Structure

Mr Sullivan provided an overview of the structural changes that were approved by the Executive Oversight Committee before its disbandment at the end of 2016. Working Group members were requested to provide feedback on whether the new structure is working.

9. Synoptic Plan progress

Mr Sullivan provided an update on the development of the Synoptic Plan workshop and long-term review. Mr Sullivan advised that the UHMD secretariat will be circulating a letter amongst JASC members to write to the Minister for Planning, the Hon Anthony Roberts to ensure this remains a priority, and encouraging members to copy in the local member Mr Michael Johnsen MP.

10. Community Perceptions Survey

Mr Milton provided an overview of the survey and key considerations delivered by Ruth McLeod at the recent JASC meeting.

The Working Group discussed whether the Dialogue is continuing to do what was originally intended or not. Mr Sullivan advised that while the survey has provided a reasonable data set of participants from the initial and later surveys, there is a wider group in the broader community that we don't know anything about. Mr Sullivan advised that as part of the Communications Activities, the Dialogue is undertaking surveys at a variety of shows and measuring interactions with the community.

11. School Bus Tours

Mr Mackie provided an update on the school bus tours noting that most schools are keen to take part. The tours will be for Years 5 & 9, rather than years 6 & 10 as per the papers.

Professor Roberts advised the Working Group of the difficulties encountered in assessing the effectiveness of engagement with students through a workshop at the Tom Farrell Institute. Professor Roberts recommended the School bus tours working group to survey students on their experience wherever possible so that its contributions can be measured to ensure the viability of the tours, and would be happy to assist the Dialogue in this respect.

Mr Mackie advised that teachers have been contacted following the trials for feedback and that school students will be required to complete a worksheet. There are logistical challenges in surveying children which may render this unable to be done.

ACTION:

- **UHMD secretariat to liaise with Professor Roberts regarding any insights into assessing interaction with students and the community through Dialogue activities.**

12. Communications Update

Mr Mackie provided an update on the Dialogue's communication activities, noting that the Landline story will likely run within the next few weeks. Mr Mackie also advised that the Weather Forecasting Video project is due to film shortly at a Glencore site.

13. Review of 2016 Forum

Mr Milton provided an overview of the Forum, including the survey of forum participants. Mr Woodward noted his experiences as a first time Forum attendee and that there was not much of a chance for interaction with other guests.

14. Minutes from the previous meeting - Water

The minutes from the previous meeting were accepted and an update on the action items provided.

15. Hunter River Water Quality Study

Mr Sullivan provided an overview of the Study proposal and advised that the outcomes of recent discussions will be provided in a revised proposal expected to be received shortly. Mr New emphasised that this study has a degree of independence through the governance of the University of Newcastle and the Advisory Group that is currently being developed. The Working Group supported Ken Bray's involvement on the Advisory Group as a Dialogue representative

Ms Bowman alerted the Working Group to a Singleton Argus article regarding irrigation. There was additional discussion from members of the Working Group on whether the scope was right, and whether the discharge points were appropriate. It was explained that basing the project on the Hunter River Salinity Trading Scheme was preferred in the first instance.

Mr Sullivan advised that this came about as a Dialogue project from community concern. The project needs to start somewhere and this is an initial study to determine if there is an issue. If further action is required to address issues, that will be considered at a later stage.

The EPA provided some clarity on their involvement and history of interest in water quality studies of the Upper Hunter when questioned about whether this is more of a job for Government to undertake rather than as a Dialogue project. EPA staff indicated that they were happy to participate in settling the scope of the project.

Mr Sullivan encouraged members to provide feedback regarding the scope if they have any additional suggestions.

16. Water Accounting Framework

Mr Milton provided an overview of the progress made with this project, noting the successful delivery of data for 2014 and 2015 and that 2016 would be collected from sites soon. The Working Group noted the similar issues with sites dropping out of the Dialogue as the rehabilitation reporting project which is undertaken annually.

17. Update on current Water projects

The current projects were noted. Ms Thomas alerted the Working Group that the Bioregional Assessment date for the Hunter workshop had changed to 4 May 2017.

18. Other Business

Mr Bray alerted the Working Group to the IPART NSW determination for prices for bulk water noting that the NSW Irrigators Council has been particularly active in this area and encouraged Working Group participants to seek further information to remain informed of developments considering the impact that several proposals will have on the grouping of water across the state.

19. Next Meeting / Meeting Close

Meeting Closed at 1.10 pm.

Actions arising from meeting on 15 March 2017 UHMD Joint Working Group - Land Management and Water Meeting

Action	Responsibility	Status
Rehabilitation Reporting		
UHMD secretariat to invite David Blackmore at DRE to present on rehabilitation digital tool and rehabilitation reform program.	UHMD secretariat	Completed DRG have advised they will be able to present at the next round of UHMD meetings in Sept / Oct 2017.
School Bus Tours Project		
UHMD secretariat to liaise with Professor Roberts regarding any insights into assessing interaction with students and the community through Dialogue activities.	UHMD secretariat	Completed

FOR INFORMATION / DISCUSSION