



MINUTES

NSW Minerals Council Joint Working Group Water Meeting

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

Thursday 20 October 2016: 9.30am-12.30pm

In attendance

David O'Brien	Glencore
Chris New	RioTinto
Chris Quinn	Bloomfield Group
James Barben	Yancoal Australia
Julie Thomas	Muswellbrook Coal Company Ltd
Ken Bray	Hunter Valley Water Users' Association
Wendy Bowman	NSW Mine Watch
Simon Francis	NSW Department of Primary Industries
Bob Mackie	theresource
Greg Sullivan	NSW Minerals Council
Craig Milton	NSW Minerals Council
Dave Frith (via teleconference)	NSW Minerals Council
Kari Dahlgren	PhD candidate (observer)

Guest

Professor Richard Bush	International Centre for Balanced Land Use (UoN)
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Apology

Preshan Pillay	BHP Billiton
Jim Morgan	UHMD Community Representative
Ron Fenwick	UHMD Community Representative
Rebekah Gomez-Fort	NSW Department of Primary Industries

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed attendees and noted apologies.

2. Minutes and actions of the previous meeting

The minutes for the 21 July 2016 meeting were confirmed. Mr Milton provided an overview on the progress of actions arising from the 21 July 2016 meeting. Mr New advised he would review the minutes and consider his action item.



3. Update on current projects

Mr Milton and Mr Sullivan provided an overview on the progress of current projects.

The update on the voids project attracted considerable discussion, with Mr Sullivan advising the JWG that NSWMC had met with Scott McDonald and Michael Johnsen, who were supportive of the development of a voids committee with a forward looking vision of up to 40 years. The NSWMC has also met with key personnel from the Department of Premier and Cabinet to act in a coordinating role. It is hoped that with their assistance we can convene a suitable group of industry, government, community and other stakeholders to determine what final outcomes we want.

Concern was expressed that we currently do not have the data to determine how long salinity and heavy metals will stay in the system. Mr O'Brien advised that monitoring is improving and increasing across the industry and that the monitoring guidance Golders Research is a great step forward.

Mr Sullivan was hopeful that the Voids Committee might invigorate some thinking on the Synoptic Plan as an update is overdue. Mr O'Brien further advised that if we know well in advance when voids will be finished we can accommodate various types of suitable uses for them and undertake the necessary planning beforehand. Mr Francis offered the support of DPI Water for a holistic approach to long-term planning.

4. Hunter River water quality - Discussion with Professor Richard Bush

Professor Richard Bush provided the JWG with a proposal for a potential study examining the background concentration of metals in the upper portion of the Hunter River. Prof. Bush advised that the study would be very focused and would be limited to providing a clear understanding of environmental risk and metals pollution through a preliminary analysis of 13 key discharge points of coal mines, so that the industry can quantify and evaluate what heavy metals exist and at what concentration.

The estimated budget for the study sits at around \$55,000, broken down into \$3,500 - \$4,500 for field sampling, \$45,000 for analysis, and \$5,000 for report preparation. This is a conservative approach to sampling that would likely yield a decent set of results to analyse. If reduced, it would have an impact on assessing the cumulative impact on regions.

Some queries were raised regarding the proposal, including the following:

- When would the sampling would take place? Flows are quite unscheduled events and we aren't able to determine exactly when the next large scale flow will be that could provide the right conditions for sampling. There was some concern over whether the sampling needed in a flow event would be too resource intensive.
- It was recommended that Prof. Bush look at sampling the tail flow of discharge events.
- Prof. Bush advised he would be undertaking sampling at $\frac{2}{3}$ depth of the water column.
- Dave O'Brien advised that most mines would have a storage facility at the end of the discharge point that may be able to assist with determining the water quality at any given time.
- There are some limitations to the study in that not all 13 discharge points are members of the NSWMC and UHMD, and some with discharge points do not in fact discharge into the Hunter River (e.g. Muswellbrook Coal).
- The JWG agreed that some baseline sampling of normal water from the Upper Hunter would assist the study. Prof. Bush advised that he is looking at gathering all readily available data.
- Prof. Bush is happy to provide more scale and numbers around the sampling costs involved. This initial study may provide a simple result to launch a more strategic set of studies from, that other stakeholders may wish to build upon.



ACTIONS:

- **NSWMC are to circulate Prof. Bush's proposal to JWG-Water members for review once refined.**
- **Prof. Bush to refine the scope of the proposal to include a baseline analysis of river health by reviewing readily available data.**
- **NSWMC to liaise with the EPA and brief them on study and present this as a course of action to replace PRP process or seek any alignment.**
- **NSWMC to approach AGL and seek their involvement and support for the study.**
- **NSWMC to approach DPI-Water for any assistance they might provide in this study.**
- **JWG-Water members to seek what water monitoring data they can gather and provide to Prof. Bush to assist with the review of available data.**
- **NSWMC is to explore additional funding options available, whether through government departments or NSWMC funds.**

5. MCA Water Accounting Framework

The JWG noted the Water Accounting Framework results for 2014 and 2015. Mr O'Brien advised this is a great recognition of the industry coming together and compiling data to coordinate their water accounting responsibilities and that this is not currently being done anywhere. Members provided helpful feedback on the media release regarding the factors behind mines discharging water.

ACTIONS:

- **NSWMC to list a contact is listed on the media release if readers require further information.**
- **NSWMC to edit last paragraph of media release to emphasise that there is both only a periodic need for mines to discharge and limited opportunities to discharge**

6. Update on communications initiatives

Mr Mackie provided an overview of the UHMD communications initiatives and provided information on the development of UHMD education resources with the assistance of Rae O'Brien that will be used in her work with students on the school bus tours.

In response to the Weather Forecasting Project video, Mr Bray alerted the JWG to resources developed by the Australian Wine Research Institute (AWRI) that report on live weather conditions that may be of use to industry members. (Link to weather station networks is here: http://www.awri.com.au/industry_support/weather-nsw/)

Greg Sullivan also noted that the NSWMC has been invited to present at the MCA Land and Community Conference in Brisbane in the coming month.

ACTIONS:

- **NSWMC to distribute shareable links to UHMD videos to members, wherever possible.**

7. 2016 UHMD Annual Forum

The JWG discussed the Forum and encouraged attendance and input from a variety of community members to ensure a robust discussion of issues. A suggestion was made to cover a whole of Dialogue journey to now that summarises the key projects and what has been achieved, that we can use for further promotion.



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ACTIONS:

- **NSWMC to produce fact sheet summarising the short history, key projects and what has been achieved to date regarding the UHMD since its inception.**

8. Update on Perception Survey project

Greg Sullivan provided an update on the survey and advised that all interviews has been completed, with preliminary findings able to be shared by the JASC meeting in early November.

9. Other business

Mr Bray advised the JWG about the bulk water pricing review being undertaken by IPART. NSWMC advised they chose not to provide a submission, but will be engaged in the process and monitor the progress of the review.

MEETING CLOSED at 11.25am



**Actions arising from meeting on 20 October 2016
 UHMD Water Joint Working Group Meeting**

Action	Responsibility	Status
4. Hunter River Water Quality Study		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSWMC are to circulate Prof. Bush's proposal to JWG-Water members for review once refined. 	NSWMC	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prof. Bush to refine the scope of the proposal to include a baseline analysis of river health by reviewing readily available data. 	University of Newcastle	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSWMC to liaise with the EPA and brief them on study and present this as a course of action to replace PRP process or seek any alignment. 	NSWMC	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSWMC to approach AGL and seek their involvement and support for the study. 	NSWMC	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSWMC to approach DPI-Water for any assistance they might provide in this study. 	NSWMC	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JWG-Water members to seek what water monitoring data they can gather and provide to Prof. Bush to assist with the review of available data. 	JWG - Water members	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSWMC is to explore additional funding options available, whether through government departments or NSWMC funds. 	NSWMC	Complete
5. Water Accounting Framework		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSWMC to list a contact is listed on the media release if readers require further information. 	NSWMC	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSWMC to edit last paragraph of media release to emphasise that there is both only a periodic need for mines to discharge and limited opportunities to discharge 	NSWMC	Complete
6. Update on communications initiatives		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSWMC to distribute shareable links to UHMD videos to members. 	NSWMC	Complete
7. 2016 UHMD Annual Forum		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSWMC to produce fact sheet summarising the short history, key projects and what has been achieved to date regarding the UHMD since its inception. 	NSWMC	Ongoing