

## MINUTES

### UHMD Joint Working Group Water Meeting Singleton Visitor Information Centre, Townhead Park, Singleton NSW

Thursday 7 May 2015: 11:00am - 1:00pm

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#### Present

David O'Brien (chair)	Glencore
Neville Hodgkinson	Singleton Shire Healthy Environment Group
Chris New	Rio Tinto – Coal & Allied Industries
Julie Thomas	Muswellbrook Coal
Harry Egan	Peabody Energy
James Barben	Yancoal – Ashton Coal Operations
Wendy Bowman	NSW Mine Watch
Ken Bray	Hunter Valley Water Users' Association
Alison Crocker	AGL
Andrew Rode	NSWMC
Greg Sullivan	NSWMC

#### Apologies

James Benson	Anglo American Metallurgical Coal
Greg Lamb	Bloomfield Collieries
Rebekah Gomez-Fort	NSW Department of Primary Industries
Ron Fenwick	UHMD - Individual contact
Adam Gilligan	NSW Environment Protection Authority

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## 1. Welcome and Apologies

David O'Brien welcomed attendees of the Joint Working Group - Water and apologies were noted.

## 2. Confirmation of the minutes and review of actions from 6 November 2014

The minutes of the 6 November 2014 meeting were confirmed.

The NSW Office of Water had not responded to the invitation to join the working group.

### **ACTION:**

- Write a letter of invitation to the NSW Office of Water to join the working group.

## 3. Update on current projects

### Water Resources Map

Andrew Rode advised that Common Ground was due to be launched in June 2015.

### Hunter River Water Quality Assessment

Andrew advised that the timing for release of the Review of the Hunter River Salinity Trading Scheme (HRSTS) had again been delayed to the end of May 2015.

Andrew's nomination to the HRSTS Operations Committee was unsuccessful.

## 4. 2014 MCA Water Accounting Framework - data and communication

Andrew advised that not all companies had yet provided MCA Water Accounting Framework (WAF) data for 2014. Andrew provided a draft schematic outlining how the MCA WAF information could be summarised on one page.

The working group made a number of suggestions for displaying and communicating the data within the 2014 MCA WAF:

- Display alluvial and deep rock aquifer groundwater separately.
- Contact Newcastle University, State Water, Arthur Burns and AGL for various water-related data in the Upper Hunter region.
- Graph water use figures over annual historical periods, and compare with rainfall over the same timeframes.
- Explain the link between environmental flows and allocations.
- Compare water use with discharge in the past.
- Keep messaging simple, for example, communicate in percentages.
- Allow an online schematic to be clickable to provide additional data.
- Provide context on groundwater take versus allocation.
- Update MCA Water Accounting Framework Communications Plan, particularly Figure 3 (compare with the same years; the most important points are upstream of Glennies Creek and Greta)
- Show the extractions that are occurring from supplementary flows.

### **ACTIONS:**

- Contact Newcastle University, State Water, Arthur Burns and AGL for various water-related data in the Upper Hunter region.
- Consider the suggestions made for presenting the MCA WAF information and update the schematic

and communications plan as appropriate.

## **5. Beneficial reuse of voids - water quality assessment**

Andrew advised that Golder Associates have been engaged to undertake a historical review of water quality in voids in the region. There was some confusion about whether the purpose of the project was to look at historical water quality or commencing water quality monitoring for new voids. Industry members were advised to revisit the question of whether they have any voids with suitable historical water quality analysis.

Wendy Bowman suggested that heavy metals have been leaching out of mines and that the project was important for obtaining data on the quantities of contaminants present.

### **ACTION:**

- Industry members to consider whether any existing voids would be suitable for a historical analysis of water quality.

## **6. Hunter Bioregional Assessment - context statement**

Andrew provided an overview of the Hunter Bioregional Assessment context statement. The document analyses existing available information to set the scene for the rest of the assessment that will focus on the potential impacts of mining on the region's water resources.

Ken Bray advised that prior to the operation of the HRSTS, the quality and pH of the Hunter River varied significantly and that salinity was half as much as it was previously.

### **ACTION:**

- Invite Bioregional Assessment to present to the working group at the next meeting.

## **7. 2014 Annual UHMD Workshop - issues raised - water**

Andrew advised that water issues were of a lower priority at the UHMD workshop than many other issues.

Wendy Bowman advised that it had been shown that algae had been used to absorb certain heavy metals and that this could be tested in mine voids. The working group suggested that investigating potential treatment would be a natural progression of the voids project. It was noted that biodegrading agents can also treat heavy metals in water.

Neville Hodkinson suggested that Hunter Valley Operations' bentonite clay barrier in its alluvial rehabilitation had not actually reinstated the alluvial flat. The working group suggested that this was a specific company issue that should be discussed with Coal and Allied.

## **8. Other Business**

Neville Hodkinson advised that he was reviewing the activities of the Dialogue by comparing the commitments that were made at the start of the initiative with what is being / has been addressed to date.

The working group also noted that there was a standing invitation for the EPA to present on the HRSTS when it is ready at the next working group meeting.

**Actions arising from meeting on 7 May 2015  
UHMD Joint Working Group Water**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>1. Welcome and Apologies</b>		
<b>2. Confirmation of Minutes of 6 November 2014</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write a letter of invitation to the NSW Office of Water to join the working group.</li> </ul>	NSWMC	Completed
<b>3. Update on current projects</b>		
<b>4. 2014 MCA Water Accounting Framework - data and communications</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact Newcastle University, State Water, Arthur Burns and AGL for various water-related data in the Upper Hunter region.</li> </ul>	NSWMC	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the suggestions made for presenting the MCA WAF information and update the schematic and communications plan as appropriate.</li> </ul>	NSWMC	Ongoing
<b>5. Beneficial reuse of voids - water quality assessment</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Industry members to consider whether any existing voids would be suitable for a historical analysis of water quality.</li> </ul>	Industry members	Completed
<b>6. Hunter Bioregional Assessment - context statement</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invite Bioregional Assessment to present to the working group at the next meeting.</li> </ul>	NSWMC	Completed
<b>7. 2014 Annual UHMD workshop - issues raised - water</b>		
<b>8. Other business</b>		