

**Actions arising from meeting on 14 November 2013
UHMD joint water working group**

Action	Responsibility	Status
1. Welcome and Apologies		
2. Confirmation of Minutes of 16 July 2013		
3. Presentation by Peter Baker		
4. Presentation by Bill Collins		
5. Update on actions from previous meeting		
6. Update on current projects		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NSWMC to provide feedback on water resource map to NOW and DRE. 	NSWMC	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NSWMC to advise of date of public information session on discussion paper on HRSTS review. 	NSWMC	
7. Other business		

MINUTES

UHMD Joint Working Group – Water meeting Singleton Visitor Information Centre Thursday 14 November 2013 – 2:00pm- 4:30pm

Present

David O'Brien (Chair)	Glencore
Rebecca Marcus	BHP Billiton – Mt Arthur Coal
Jason Fittler	Anglo American Metallurgical Coal
Chris New	Rio Tinto – Coal & Allied Industries
Alan Tight	Yancoal – Ashton Coal Operations
John Hindmarsh	Bloomfield Collieries
Troy Favell	Peabody Energy – Wambo Coal
Bill Collins	The University of Newcastle
Ron Fenwick	Wambo CCC – Singleton
Steve Clarkson	Singleton Council
Ken Bray	Hunter Valley Water Users' Association
Arthur Burns	Hunter Valley Water Users' Association
Peter Baker	Commonwealth Office of Water Science
Andrew Rode	NSWMC
Claire Doherty	NSWMC
David Frith	NSWMC
Brad Deane	NSWMC

Apologies

Chris Knight	Muswellbrook Coal
Greg Lamb	Bloomfield Collieries
Rebekah Gomez-Fort	NSW Department of Primary Industries
Lesley Latter	Peabody Energy – Wambo Coal
Aled Hoggett	NSW Farmers Association
Wendy Bowman	NSW Mine Watch
Dan Byrne	Vale – Integra Coal Operations
James Benson	Anglo American Metallurgical Coal
Steve Eccles	Hunter-Central Rivers CMA

1. Welcome and Apologies

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

2. Confirmation of the minutes from the 16 July 2013 meeting

The minutes of the 22 April 2013 meeting were confirmed.

3. Presentation by Peter Baker – Commonwealth Office of Water Science

Peter Baker provided an overview of the bioregional assessments being undertaken by the Office of Water Science (OWS) for the Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Coal Seam Gas and Large Coal Mining Development (IESC).

The hunter assessment will be undertaken by CSIRO and completed in 2016, however several working documents will be released gradually, starting from around the 3rd quarter of 2014.

Assessing cumulative impacts to receptors is part of the methodology, and will consider impacts that are both direct and indirect.

4. Presentation by Bill Collins – University of Newcastle

Bill Collins provided an overview of a groundwater monitoring methodology.

Bill expressed his views about the importance of gaining the contextual information about groundwater systems by using an isotropic tracing methodology, to understand the interactions between aquifers. This would confirm conceptual groundwater models that are used.

5. Update on actions from previous meeting

1. A soft-copy of the updated Terms of Reference for the working group has been sent.
2. University of Newcastle's capability statement and scope of a water study has been sent to the JWG.
3. Evaporative sprayers are currently being internally reviewed at Wambo with advice being received from the Department of Planning, therefore it was considered not appropriate to discuss this issue in this forum.
4. Each mine is addressing the EPA letter:
 - Glencore has engaged a consultant to understand what water quality is on site and what monitoring occurs, to inform whether additional monitoring is required. Glencore is also waiting on the results of the EPA HRSTS review work.
 - Bloomfield is looking at the impacts of discharge to the local creek.
 - Coal and Allied undertakes comprehensive 6-monthly and 12-monthly sampling of various analytes at dams they discharge from, which is reported in Annual Environmental Management Reports.
 - Wambo Coal undertakes 12-month testing of discharge water. They are also establishing a baseline by testing the background levels at Wollombi Brook that they discharge into.
 - Ashton Coal is a non-discharge site, however undertake comprehensive water testing on a 6-monthly basis of water storages.
 - Anglo American's Drayton site is a non-discharge site, nevertheless their storage have been tested. Dartbrook have 6-monthly testing, and will also be testing the upstream and downstream water at the next discharge event.
 - BHP Billiton regularly monitor a number of dams, and are investigating the background water quality levels in the Hunter River.
5. The water accounting framework takes evaporation into account by considering the volume and area of the void, and run by using pan-evaporation rates. Ron Fenwick commented that evaporation rates exceed precipitation rates. Bill Collins commented that precipitation rates across the region are not correlated to evaporation rates from a storage dam.
6. The aggregated MCA Water Accounting Framework results were presented in Item 6.
7. Further MCA Water Accounting Framework analysis will be provided as mines receive more data.
8. The 16 July workshop report was distributed to the JWG.

6. Update on current projects

MCA Water Accounting Framework

Andrew Rode presented aggregated 12 month input and output data for 11 of the mines that had sufficient historical data. These mines represented a large proportion of production in the Upper Hunter.

The group discussed whether the quality information could be overlaid with geography. The quality information is more easily linked to the type of input and output (e.g. bore water is generally category 3 and river water is generally category 1).

IESC project

The earlier presentation by Peter Baker has progressed the engagement with the IESC.

Water Resources Map

Andrew Rode presented a preliminary draft pdf map. Suggestions were made to improve the map, including:

- Having a geological layer.
- Having a high-resolution photographic layer.
- Merging smaller sub-lease areas into the colliery holding boundary.
- Showing lower reaches of the Hunter River.
- Including the Bylong-Ulan area in the map, as it is part of the Hunter catchment.

Hunter River Water Quality Assessment

The EPA will be holding a public information session on its Hunter River Salinity Trading Scheme (HRSTS) in December. NSWMC will advise the JWG of the date of the information session.

ACTIONS

- NSWMC to provide feedback on water resource map to NOW and DRE.
- NSWMC to advise of date of public information session on discussion paper on HRSTS review.

7. Other Business

December workshop

Claire Doherty provided an overview of the program for the 3 December 2013 project workshop.

Other government work in the water area

Arthur Burns advised that there is other work occurring at the moment in the water space:

- NSW Office of Water is currently updating the Hunter Regulated River Water Sharing Plan for commencement in June 2015.
- Manly Hydraulics Laboratory is undertaking modelling of the Hunter Estuary.

8. Next meeting

The next meeting date will be advised offline.

The meeting closed at 4:30 pm.