



NSW MINERALS COUNCIL
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AGENDA
NSW Minerals Council

UHMD Joint Working Group Meeting - Land Management

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

Thursday 21 July 2016: 9.30am - 11.30am

1. Welcome and apologies
2. Minutes and actions of the previous meeting
3. Working group performance, relevance and strategic direction
4. Update on current projects
5. Grazing study progress report
6. Draft rehabilitation reporting for 2015
7. Rehabilitation awareness and promotion project
8. Other business

DRAFT MINUTES

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

Wednesday 11 May 2016: 1.30pm- 4.30pm

Present

Bill Baxter (Chair)
Nigel Charnock
Julie Thomas
Bob Mackie
Jim Morgan
Sean Constable
Monique Meyer
John Hindmarsh
Rebekah Gomez-Fort
Greg Woodward
John Drinan
Steve Brown
Andrew Rode

Rio Tinto
Glencore
Muswellbrook Coal Company Limited
theresource
Wybong Action Group
Upper Hunter Shire Council
NSW Department of Industry, Division of Resources and Energy
The Bloomfield Group
NSW Department of Primary Industries
Community member
Singleton Shire Healthy Environment Group
The Bloomfield Group
NSW Minerals Council

Apology

Dee Murdoch
Glenda Briggs
Matthew Newton
Greg Sullivan
Ron Fenwick
Wendy Bowman
Jason Desmond
Sarah Withell
Neil Griffiths
Jo Powells
Digby Short
Bruce Devonport
Tim Roberts
Melinda Hale
Ian Napier
Arthur Burns

AECOM
Department of Primary Industries
NSW Department of Industry, Division of Resources and Energy
NSW Minerals Council
Community member
NSW Mine Watch
The Bloomfield Group
BHP Billiton
NSW Department of Primary Industries
NSW Department of Primary Industries
Ashton Coal
Singleton Council
The University of Newcastle
Singleton Council
Hunter Valley Wine Industry Association
Hunter Valley Water Users' Association

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed attendees and noted apologies.

2. Minutes and actions of the previous meeting

The minutes of the 11 November 2015 meeting were confirmed.

ONGOING ACTION:

- NSWMC to organise a presentation from OEH on the Upper Hunter Strategic Assessment, when the materials are publicly released.

NEW ACTIONS:

- NSWMC to follow-up information relating to the University of Newcastle's analysis of voids.

3. Update on current projects

The working group noted the updates to the rehabilitation reporting and grazing study projects.

4. Biodiversity Reference Sites project

The working group discussed the proposed scope of the project. The working group considered the benefit of this project to be that it provided more robustness and certainty that a rehabilitated site had been returned to a comparative state. The working group suggested that:

- It be made clear that it is the reference site information that is being shared. Not the sites themselves.
- That Umwelt provide suggestions on how best to share the information.
- That Umwelt include in its scope a map and photos of the reference sites.
- That industry members be provided the opportunity to provide further detailed comments.

ACTIONS:

- Umwelt to revise the scope of work for the Biodiversity Reference Sites project to include:
 - A map of the reference sites.
 - Photos of the sites.
 - Advice on how best to share the reference site information.
- Industry members to be provided a further opportunity to review the scope in detail, and provide comment.

5. Rehabilitation awareness and promotion project

The working group discussed the project and it was agreed that the working group should stay involved in the development and review of the project.

6. DRE Exploration and Mining Rehabilitation Factsheet

The working group considered DRE's factsheet and suggested it could be improved with some simple schematics to make it easier to understand. The working group also suggested that there were a range of opportunities to promote rehabilitation successes beyond "safe and stable" landforms. It was noted that the rehabilitation awareness and promotion project would deliver this need, such as by producing rehabilitation examples such as collated in the Minerals Council of Australia's case studies presented in its *'Mine rehabilitation in the Australian minerals industry'*.

ACTIONS:

- NSWMC to send MCA rehabilitation report to working group.

7. Voids project

The working group noted that the deliverables of the voids project had been completed. Some members of the working group expressed significant concerns associated with water use and water quality in voids and that future voids should be backfilled. It was believed that a better understanding of each void was required to inform potential end uses and limitations to those uses.

Some other members believed there were a range of potential end uses, and that it was important to be able to understand when they would be available for use, whether a Development Application could be changed to facilitate different uses and simplify the transfer of ownership for the voids.

It was suggested that NSWMC meet with the Department of Planning and Environment to discuss a regional voids strategy.

ACTION:

- NSWMC to discuss a regional voids strategy with the Department of Planning and Environment.

8. Pasture Plants of the Upper Hunter book

The working group discussed the possible funding of a Pasture Plants of the Upper Hunter book.

The working group believed that the ~\$30,000 price tag was too high as a stand-alone UHMD project. However the working group was interested to know whether the cost could be significantly reduced by producing it as a pdf only, and whether there were any other potential partners interested in funding it (e.g. DPE, LLS). Establishing a user pays mechanism was also suggested.

ACTION:

- Neil Griffiths to advise the estimated cost of a pdf-only version of the Pasture Plants of the Upper Hunter book, and whether any other potential funding partners existed.

9. 2015 UHMD Annual Forum report

The working group noted the outcomes of the UHMD Annual Forum.

10. Update on UHMD communications initiatives and media mentions

The working group noted the updates on UHMD communications.

11. Working group performance, relevance and strategic direction

Due to time constraints, it was suggested that this item be discussed at the next JWG meeting.

ACTION:

- Working group to discuss working group performance, relevance and strategic direction at next JWG meeting.

12. Other business

No other business. The meeting closed at 4:20pm.

**Actions arising from meeting on 11 May 2016
UHMD Land Management Joint Working Group Meeting**

Action	Responsibility	Status
1. Welcome and Apologies		
2. Minutes and actions of the previous meeting		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSWMC to organise a presentation from OEH on the Upper Hunter Strategic Assessment, when the materials are publicly released. 	NSWMC	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSWMC to follow-up information relating to the University of Newcastle's analysis of voids. 	NSWMC	Completed
3. Update on current projects		
4. Biodiversity Reference Sites project		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Umwelt to revise the scope of work for the Biodiversity Reference Sites project to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A map of the reference sites. Photos of the sites. Advice on how best to share the reference site information. 	NSWMC / Umwelt	In progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industry members to be provided a further opportunity to review the scope in detail, and provide comment. 	NSWMC & Industry representatives	Completed
5. Rehabilitation awareness and promotion project		
6. DRE Exploration and Mining Rehabilitation Factsheet		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSWMC to send MCA rehabilitation report to working group. 	NSWMC	Completed
7. Voids project		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSWMC to discuss a regional voids strategy with the Department of Planning and Environment. 	NSWMC	In progress
8. Pasture Plants of the Upper Hunter book		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neil Griffiths to advise the estimated cost of a pdf-only version of the Pasture Plants of the Upper Hunter book, and whether any other potential funding partners existed. 	Neil Griffiths	In progress
9. 2015 UHMD Annual Forum Report		
10. Update on UHMD communications initiatives and media mentions		
11. Working group performance, relevance and strategic direction		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working group to discuss working group performance, relevance and strategic direction at next JWG meeting. 	NSWMC	Completed
12. Other business		

Agenda Item 3

WORKING GROUP PERFORMANCE, RELEVANCE AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Issue

NSWMC is interested to discuss the working group members' perspectives on how the working group is performing and whether the activities and issues are still relevant and important for members. Any suggestions on the strategic direction of the UHMD and this working group are welcome.

Background

To prompt thinking and discussion, NSWMC poses the following questions for consideration:

- How well do you believe the working group is performing?
- Are the working groups projects, activities and issues still relevant and important and of interest?
- Are the working group goals still relevant?
- What could be improved to make the working group more effective?
- Are there any strategic changes that could be made to the UHMD or the working group?

The working group goals are provided, for reference:

1. Decrease the time that disturbed areas are left without temporary or final cover, recognising that different mining operations are at different points in rehabilitation.
2. Achieve a consistent level of best practice, quality, integrated rehabilitation across the Upper Hunter - both within the industry and with future land uses - and to be a responsible steward of the land.

RECOMMENDATION

That the working group provide feedback on the working group's performance, relevance and any areas that could be improved.

FOR INFORMATION / DISCUSSION

Agenda Item 4

UPDATE ON CURRENT PROJECTS

Grazing Study

Refer to Item 5.

Rehabilitation Reporting

Refer to Item 6.

Rehabilitation awareness and promotion

Refer to item 7.

Biodiversity Reference Sites

Umwelt has provided a revised scope for the project. NSWMC is currently formalising Umwelt's engagement in order to commence the project.

Beneficial reuse of voids

NSWMC has prepared a draft media release, draft updated web content and is also preparing a UHMD article to go out to UHMD participants about the completion of the work.

NSWMC will be meeting with DPE and DRE to develop a Upper Hunter Regional Committee on rehabilitation (and voids).

FOR INFORMATION

Agenda Item 5

GRAZING STUDY PROGRESS REPORT

Issue

As the grazing study progresses, some potential follow on projects have been identified.

Background

Update on grazing study

An ACARP progress report has recently been submitted (see attached). An excerpt of the reports summary is provided below:

This project continues to have strong interest and support from all involved. Considerable interest was shown by media following presentation of interim results at the 2016 Mine Rehabilitation conference held in Singleton in April. This was followed by a similar presentation at a national mine rehabilitation workshop in Adelaide in May.

Final results from the first batches of steers at both Mt Arthur and Hunter Valley Operations showed an advantage in weight, fat cover and value to steers grazing the rehabilitated mine pastures. This is consistent with the amount of pasture biomass available at each site during the study period. While these results are encouraging it is important to note that they reflect the age and quality of the rehabilitation work being monitored and do not indicate quality or outcomes from other mine rehabilitation work.

A new batch of steers was introduced at Mt Arthur in March. The HVO site is currently waiting on lessees to arrange for new steers for that site.

Seasonal conditions continue to influence pasture growth and livestock performance. Good rain and associated pasture growth occurred in December and January but near record low rainfall has been received since then.

Potential grazing study follow on projects

Neil Griffiths (DPI) has suggested that there may be some opportunity for further studies post the completion of the grazing study. A couple of options included:

- Surveying farmer attitudes towards mining, particularly as a result of outcomes of the grazing trials.
- Experimentation of newer introduced pasture species on rehabilitated land. This would help identify the best species for rehabilitation for use in grazing.

RECOMMENDATION

That the working group:

- Provide any suggestions / feedback on the progress of the grazing study.
- Provide any suggestions for follow-on work post completion of the grazing study.

FOR INFORMATION / DISCUSSION

Agenda Item 6

DRAFT REHABILITATION REPORTING FOR 2015

Issue

The draft rehabilitation figures for 2015 have been collated.

Background

The draft rehabilitation figures for 2015 are presented in the table below. The figure for 'E' still requires verification by Anglo American, nevertheless, some interesting aspects of the most recent data includes:

- The rehabilitation to disturbance ratio has dropped to 0.6:1. This is due to an increase in the amount of land newly disturbed rather than a decrease in the amount of land newly rehabilitated.
- The increase to the amount of land newly disturbed is predominantly due to the establishment of the Bulga Optimisation project.
- Some reconciliation and correction of figures has occurred from 2014 to 2015. That is why 2014D does not equal 2015A.

	Rehabilitation	2012 (hectares)	2013 (hectares)	2014 (hectares)	2015 (hectares)
A	Total land area disturbed and not yet rehabilitated at the beginning of the reporting period [4]	17,830	18,098	18,479	20,171
B	Total amount of land newly disturbed within the reporting period	1,163	1,148	1,057	1,424[6]
C	Total amount of land newly rehabilitated[1] within the reporting period (rehabilitation commenced in this period)	895	962	801	856
D	Total land area disturbed and not yet rehabilitated at the end of the reporting period (D = A + B - C)	18,098	18,283	18,736	21,008
E	Total area of rehabilitation at all operations at the end of the reporting period[2]	8,791	9,145	10,023	10,783
F	Annual rehabilitation to disturbance ratio (C:B)[3]	0.77	0.84	0.76	0.60
G	Overall proportion of disturbed land rehabilitated (E/(D+E))	32.7%	33.3%	34.9%	33.9%
	Other Land Managed	2012 (hectares)	2013 (hectares)	2014 [5] (hectares)	2015 (hectares)
	Estimate of the total land held as biodiversity offsets	10,973	13,164	22,607	22,773
	Estimate of the total area of land managed for agricultural use (e.g. grazing, cropping, viticulture)	57,533	60,174	44,252	44,632
	[1] Rehabilitation is defined by the Mining Act 1992 as the treatment or management of disturbed land or water for the purpose of establishing a safe and stable environment.				
	[2] Row E2013 may not equal Row C2013 + Row E2012 as areas that have been previously rehabilitated, then re-disturbed are excluded from the Total area of				

	rehabilitation of all operations at the end of the reporting period
	[3]The rehabilitation to disturbance ratio indicates how many hectares of rehabilitation are undertaken for each hectare of land disturbed during the year. A ratio of 1 indicates that the area of rehabilitation and disturbance in that year are the same.
	[4] Row A(Year) does not necessarily equal Row D (Year -1) because some companies have reconciled their figures and corrected them over time.
	[5] There have been substantial changes in the amount of 'Other Land Managed' between 2013 and 2014 because: (i) significant increases in additional offset areas have been established, and (ii) because some of the land previously identified as being used for Agriculture is now being used for mining purposes or biodiversity offsets.
	[6] The increase in land newly disturbed in 2015 is predominantly due to the establishment of the Bulga Optimisation project.

FOR INFORMATION / DISCUSSION

Agenda Item 7

REHABILITATION AWARENESS AND PROMOTION

Issue

NSWMC has commenced a collaborative initiative with DRE on rehabilitation that focuses on rehabilitation not only in the Upper Hunter, but across NSW.

Background

The first initiative of this collaboration is the production of a booklet and accompanying digital materials that will explain the rehabilitation regulatory framework in NSW, promote best practice examples of rehabilitation undertaken by mining operators and highlight the innovation and research that is underway in this space. It is intended that the booklet and accompanying online materials will be launched by Minister Roberts and the NSWMC CEO. NSWMC intends for this to be the first of a series of projects under this collaborative partnership with DRE.

The booklet would be split in three parts:

- Part 1: The rehabilitation legislative and policy framework, the rehabilitation bond and its assessment (including relinquishment), rehabilitation plans, the objectives of rehabilitation and the role of DRE in regulating rehabilitation. This section will be led by DRE.
- Part 2: Best practice rehabilitation - this section would consist of a series of case studies - probably four or five. The case studies would be provided by NSWMC member companies and would cover a range of different forms of rehabilitation - for example, agricultural land, restoration of ecological communities and community use. NSWMC will lead this section with assistance from the Centre for Balanced Land Use at University of Newcastle (UoN).
- Part 3: Innovation and research - this section would showcase some of the rehabilitation research that is currently underway as well as some of the innovative trials taking place. This would be a joint effort between NSWMC (providing some information on pilot studies), DRE and the CRC CARE (Contamination Assessment and Remediation of the Environment) which is now based in Newcastle at UoN. The CRC specialises in developing cost effective ways to solve contamination problems. It has received global recognition for its work and works closely with industry and government.

The next step in this project is for NSWMC and its members is the production of the case studies that will be used in parts 2 and 3 of the booklet. The Centre for Balanced Land Use, led by Professor Richard Bush, will be assisting with the compilation of the materials that will form the case studies.

RECOMMENDATION

NSWMC encourages the JWG to identify any case studies or materials (e.g. photographs, summaries etc.) that may be used.

FOR INFORMATION / DISCUSSION