

AGENDA
Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue
Joint Working Group - Land Management and Water Meeting

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

Wednesday 27 June 2018: 10:00 am to 1:00 pm

**Local dial in: Local dial in: (02) 8319 9443
Organizer code: 5459 8644 / Participant code: 2232 6628**

Agenda items		10:00 am
Land Management		
1.	Welcome and Apologies (5 mins)	
2.	Minutes and actions of the previous meeting (5 mins)	
3.	DRG Rehabilitation Reform Program (15 mins)	Attachments
4.	Rehabilitation Principles and Commitments 2017 results (15 mins)	Attachments
5.	Current land management projects and other land management business (5 mins)	
Combined Session		10:55 am
6.	Presentation: <i>Rehabilitation Visualisation Tool</i> , Steve Barry & Hamish Aiken (Department of Planning & Environment) (40 mins)	Attachments
7.	Strategic Discussion on Dialogue Objectives (35 mins)	
8.	Synoptic Plan Review Update (15 mins)	Attachments
9.	Update on communications activities (10 mins)	Attachments
Water		12:20 pm
10.	Hunter River Water Quality Study (15 mins)	
11.	Bioregional Assessments Update (5 mins)	Attachments
12.	Current water projects and other water business (5 mins)	
13.	General Dialogue matters (5 mins)	
14.	Next Meeting / Close (5 mins)	

**UHMD Joint Working Group - Water and Land Management
27 June 2018**

Agenda Item 2

MINUTES AND ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

DRAFT MINUTES

**Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue
Joint Working Group Water and Land Management Meeting**

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

Wednesday 28 March 2018: 10.00 am- 1.00 pm

In attendance

Bill Baxter (Chair)	Yancoal
John Campbell	Bengalla Mining Company
Paul Amidy	Glencore
Ken Bray	Hunter Valley Water Users Association
Julie Thomas	Muswellbrook Coal
Neil Griffiths	NSW Department of Primary Industries
Harry Rose	NSW Department of Primary Industries (Observer)
Mark Scandrett	Muswellbrook Shire Council
Monique Meyer	Resources Regulator
Michaela Susan O'Dwyer	NSW Department of Primary Industries
Wendy Bowman	NSW Mine Watch
Chris Knight	The Bloomfield Group
Ron Fenwick	Wambo CCC / Community Individual
Jim Morgan	Wybong Action Group / NSW Farmers' Association
Ron Fenwick	Community Representative (part meeting)
Bob Mackie	theresource
James Barben	NSW Minerals Council

Apology

Karen Marler	NSW Environment Protection Authority
Simon Francis	DPI Water
Nigel Charnock	Glencore
Tim Roberts	Tom Farrell Institute
Merri Bartlett	Peabody Energy
Neil Nelson	Singleton Beef and Land Management Association
Glenda Briggs	NSW Department of Primary Industries
Jo Powells	NSW Department of Primary Industries
Tony Cox	NSW Department of Industry
Cameron Archer	Tom Farrell Institute
Craig Milton	NSW Minerals Council

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed attendees and noted apologies. Mr. Mark Scandrett was welcomed as a new member of the JWG.

2. Minutes and actions of the previous meeting

The minutes were accepted. Mr. Barben provided a brief update on outstanding action items, noting that several are addressed in these papers, or are in progress.

3. Hunter River Water Quality Study

Mr. Barben provided an update on the Hunter River Water Quality Study indicating that the study was being finalised by the University and that members of the steering committee provided comments on a draft report.

4. Water Accounting Framework 2016 results

Mr. Barben provided an overview of the results from the 2016 Water Accounting Framework. The results were similar to prior years and the Working Group advised that it would be important to start collating trends of the data now that several year's worth have been collected.

5. Update on current water projects

Mr. Barben noted that most of the current water projects are addressed in the papers except for the update on the Bioregional Assessment. It was noted that the Bioregional Assessment was available online for one region and the Hunter was expected in mid-2018.

6. Other water business

Mr. Bray provided an update on the water reforms that are currently underway because of the Murray Darling review. It was noted that the reforms are focused on compliance with water licenses and measuring water take.

7. 2017 UHMD Annual Forum

Mr. Barben provided an overview of the outcomes from the 2017 Annual Forum noting the challenge for the UHMD in seeking further community representatives. Generally, the forum was well received, and participants appreciated the updates on the projects.

8. 2018 Strategic Discussion

Mr. Barben provided an update on the outcomes of the JASC and ISC as noted in the papers. Discussion was then had amongst the JWG members regarding their priorities for the UHMD noting the following key points:

Mr. Scandrett advised that he sought more information for the community in relation to air quality and that he would be able to distribute UHMD information through his networks if supplied in an appropriate format. Information on the Water Accounting Framework would also be valuable.

Mr. Morgan noted the importance of focussing on land use after mining but also land use alongside mining as many projects have substantial life spans.

Mr. Morgan advised that the UHMD should try and accommodate schools from outside of the district on mine tours or at least share the training materials. It was noted that there would be some benefit in expanding the program to the Lower Hunter and Newcastle however the constraints around site availability, the already challenging logistics and cost were noted by the JWG.

The JWG discussed the value of mine tourism for the public beyond the school tour program. It was seen to be a long-standing desire of the community and the JWG requested that this be discussed with the JASC.

ACTION

- **UHMD Secretariat to provide Mr. Scandrett with fact sheet style information on Air Quality and the Water Accounting Framework for distribution through Muswellbrook Council networks.**
- **Discuss the possibility of establishing mine tours for the public at the following JASC meeting.**

9. Synoptic Plan Review Update

Mr. Barben provided an update on the Synoptic Plan review noting that little progress had been made

since the UHMD 2017 Annual Forum Workshop. Mr. Barben encouraged UHMD participants to attend the update being provided by the Department of Premier and Cabinet as part of the Coal Festival.

10. Update on communications activities

Mr. Mackie provided an overview of the various communications activities including providing a summary the key findings from the UHMD Community Surveys, with members interested in these findings and how they may be used to improve our engagement. Mr. Griffiths noted that Local Land Services would be a valuable stakeholder in targeted engagement.

Mr. Mackie also provided a brief update on the upcoming Coal Festival events that he is coordinating for the local Business Chambers.

11. DRG Rehabilitation Reform Program update

Ms. Meyer provided an update on reforms within the Department of Planning and Environment with the Environmental Sustainability Unit being transferred to the Resources Regulator bringing a stronger focus on compliance and enforcement activities.

Ms. Meyer also provided an update on the Rehab Reform Program with consultation to commence in mid-April. It was anticipated that the GIS portal would commence on 1 July 2018.

The reforms included changing the Mining Operations Plan from a seven-year plan to a more dynamic three-year plan looking at the final landform trajectory. Failure to make sufficient progress would be met with enforcement actions by the Resources Regulator.

Mr. Morgan expressed concerns that a lot of work has been happening behind the scenes and the details were not getting through to the community.

Discussion was held amongst members regarding the requirements to assess different rehabilitation and land form options through the Environmental Assessment process and Ms. Meyer advised that the standard SEAR's required such assessments to be undertaken. Ms. Meyer advised that if sufficient information on rehabilitation was not provided up front as part of a Development Application then it would be rejected.

Mr. Morgan advised that while the standards might be improving, the public are not seeing these changes and new regulatory requirements. The community is not receiving the information in an accessible and understandable fashion.

Mr. Barben advised that the submissions on the Department of Planning and Environment *Improving Mine Rehabilitation* Discussion Paper were available online.

ACTION

- **A copy of the standard SEAR's to be distributed with these minutes**
- **Invite the Resources Regulator to attend the JWG meeting in Q3 to present on the Rehab Reform Program progress**

12. Rehabilitation reporting 2016 results

Mr. Barben provided an overview of the 2016 rehabilitation reporting results noting the shift in land area from agricultural purposes to biodiversity offsets.

Mr. Scandrett advised that he believed that such a change was made to reduce rateable land area. Mr. Barben noted that this was a result of changes in Government policy for biodiversity offsetting.

13. Update on current land management projects

Mr. Griffiths and Mr. Rose gave an overview of the second phase of their ACARP cattle grazing project and advised that they would soon be seeking data from mining companies and access to sites for their studies. This project is expected to be delivered by Q1 2019.

Mr. Griffiths also advised that their initial paper had been published on the ACARP website, but it was accessible only by paying for the report.

ACTION

- **If possible, distribute the initial cattle grazing study paper and distribute to the JWG.**

14. Other land management business

Mr. Barben provided an update on the Senate Inquiry into mine rehabilitation and the ICMM mine closure workshop.

15. General Dialogue matters

Mr. Bray advised that the Upper Hunter Land Services would be commencing a project on the Hunter River involving a reference group of local stakeholders.

16. Next Meeting / Close

Mr. Baxter advised that he would be stepping down as chair of the JWG to rotate the role. Mr. Barben and the JWG thanked Mr. Baxter for his excellent work in chairing the group. Mr. Barben advised that an applicant for Chair had been received and this would be resolved before the next meeting.

The next meeting dates for 2018 were provided to the working group for reference.

ACTION

- **Determine replacement chair for JWG - Land and Water**

The meeting closed at 12:20 pm

**Actions arising from meeting
UHMD Water Joint Working Group Meeting**

Action	Responsibility	Status
Strategic Discussion		
UHMD Secretariat to provide Mr. Scandrett with fact sheet style information on Air Quality and the Water Accounting Framework for distribution through Muswellbrook Council networks.	UHMD Secretariat	Completed
Discuss the possibility of establishing mine tours for the public at the following JASC meeting.	UHMD Secretariat	Completed
DRG Rehabilitation Reform Program		
A copy of the standard SEAR's to be distributed with these minutes	UHMD Secretariat	Completed
Invite the Resources Regulator to attend the JWG meeting in Q3 to present on the Rehab Reform Program progress	UHMD Secretariat	In progress
Land Management Projects		
If possible, distribute the initial cattle grazing study paper and distribute to the JWG.	UHMD Secretariat	Completed
Next Meeting		
Determine replacement chair for JWG - Land and Water	UHMD Secretariat	Completed

**UHMD Joint Working Group - Water and Land Management
27 June 2018**

Agenda Item 3

NSW GOVERNMENT REHABILITATION REFORM PROGRAM UPDATE

Issue

The NSW Government is currently preparing to introduce reforms to the state rehabilitation framework and is expected to commence consultation with key stakeholders shortly.

Background

Please see below for brief updates on several aspects of the NSW government's rehabilitation reform program, as well as other relevant government initiatives.

DRG Rehabilitation Reform Program

The Environmental Sustainability Unit, now within the Resources Regulator, is yet to commence targeted consultation on the Rehabilitation Reform Program. Once the documents are finalised for release, the consultation period will still run for six weeks. The reform documents will have a considerable impact on how industry is to conduct and report their rehabilitation activities. The reforms include the following components:

- New proposed Standard Mining Lease Conditions
- Four new Codes of Practice covering Rehabilitation Management Plans for Large and Small Mines, and Annual Rehabilitation Report and Forward Program for Large and Small Mines
- Five Guidelines, covering Rehabilitation Risk Assessments, Rehabilitation Records, Rehabilitation Controls, and Rehabilitation GIS Portal and Guidance Material.

The key changes arising from these reforms will be the development of Rehabilitation Management Plans, and preparation of an Annual Rehabilitation Report and Forward Program that will summarise progressive rehabilitation and report on progress made against stated objectives on a yearly and forward-looking basis.

The JWG has a standing action item to invite the Resources Regulator to the Q3 meeting in September to provide an update on how the implementation of the reforms are progressing.

Rehabilitation GIS portal

The GIS Portal is currently being finalised following industry consultation. This was expected to be released in July, although given the delay in consultation for the whole reform program, the launch of the portal has been extended beyond this date.

Government Restructure of DRG and the Resources Regulator

A significant restructure of agencies under the Department of Planning and Environment cluster has now been finalised. There is likely to be a considerable shift in the personnel involved in the development of policy and enforcement of regulation, with several newly created positions announced in DRG. Those familiar with DRG in the past may be aware that Dr. David Blackmore has shifted to the Titles portfolio under DRG. Matt Newton has stepped into the role of Director, Compliance Operations within the Resources Regulator (the former Director of the Environmental Sustainability Unit role).

The Resources Regulator also announced a compliance blitz recently, focused on work health and safety issues as well as rehabilitation and dam monitoring. Eighty inspectors and regulatory officers from the safety, environment and compliance teams visited 109 mine and petroleum sites statewide, with the operation finding generally good compliance with legislative obligations.

However, several issues were identified at a small number of sites – in relation to plant and equipment – resulting in 28 prohibition notices being issued at 12 sites.

DPE Improving Mine Rehabilitation discussion paper

DPE released this discussion paper for consultation in early 2018, which was seeking to develop a policy on rehabilitation and how mine voids are to be assessed for mining operations. The government is preparing a policy at present for consultation in the second half of 2018.

Recommendation:

- **JWG members note the government activity underway.**

FOR INFORMATION / DISCUSSION

**UHMD Joint Working Group - Water and Land Management
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Agenda Item 4

REHABILITATION REPORTING AND PRINCIPLES PROJECT

Issue

The Rehabilitation Principles and Commitments project remains a key annual Dialogue activity. It is important that this project be completed in a timely fashion.

Background

Earlier in 2018, the JASC and ISC recommended that the Dialogue secretariat seek to improve the data collection of rehabilitation information from industry to help facilitate a timelier publishing date, and to ensure this information is relevant to stakeholders. All data has now been collected from industry.

See below for the key results from this year's Rehab reporting project and attached a spreadsheet with the data provided (2012 to 2017). This is the first year that rehabilitation data from the MACH Energy Mount Pleasant Operation has been included in the results. Given this is a new operation, there is a considerable amount of disturbance, which has impacted the overall results for 2017. To provide some context to the 2017 results, we have included two columns for 2017 figures - one including Mount Pleasant figures, and one excluding these figures. Please see the key outcomes below:

- The rehab to disturbance ratio dips to 0.57 in 2017, from 0.71 in 2016.
- A significant rise in the total amount of land held as either biodiversity offsets (64% increase), or agricultural land (48% increase). Both figures rise slightly if Mount Pleasant data is excluded.
- An increase in newly disturbed land, although this was higher in 2015. The overall proportion of disturbed land rehabilitated continues to increase regardless of whether Mount Pleasant data is included.

While one negative aspect of the results this years is the overall reduction in the amount of newly rehabilitated land (from 907 ha in 2016 to 763 ha in 2017), this result is offset by the greatest ever reduction in new land disturbance from previously surveyed companies from 1270 ha in 2016 to 743 in 2017, a reduction of over 500 ha of disturbance. If Mount Pleasant figures are not included and we simply took the data from those previously surveyed, we would see a positive rehabilitation to disturbance ratio of 1.03, with a greater proportion of rehabilitation being undertaken than disturbing land.

The Industry Steering Committee has reviewed these preliminary results, recommending that the Dialogue secretariat consider presenting the results in a similar format to the Water Accounting infographics, which can provide the key figures and observations in the broader context.

Given the project has now delivered five years of data, we are starting to see some interesting trends:

- Since the reporting project commenced in 2012, the amount of land held in biodiversity offsets continues to increase and is now almost four times the original figure for industry in 2012, from just under 11,000 hectares to 41,000 hectares.
- There is now significantly more land being held as biodiversity offsets than the total land area disturbed and not yet rehabilitated in the Upper Hunter.
- The overall proportion of disturbed land that has been rehabilitated has increased from 32.7% in 2012, to 36.0% in 2017, an increase of 3.3%.
- The total amount of rehabilitated land has grown from 8,791 ha in 2012 to 12,370 ha in 2017, a growth of 40.7%, or 3,579 hectares.
- The total area of land disturbed but not yet rehabilitated has increased by 3,930 ha between 2012 and 2017, from 18,098 ha to 22,028 ha.

Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue Rehabilitation Reporting Project (2012 to 2017)								
	Rehabilitation	2012 (ha)	2013 (ha)	2014 (ha)	2015 (ha)	2016 (ha)	2017 (ha)	2017- ex. MP (ha)
A	Total land area disturbed and not yet rehabilitated at the beginning of the reporting period	17,830	18,098	18,479	20,171	21,180	21,411	21,384
B	Total amount of land newly disturbed within the reporting period	1,163	1,148	1,057	1,424	1,270	1,327	743
C	Total amount of land newly rehabilitated within the reporting period (rehabilitation commenced in this period)	895	962	801	856	907	763	763
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	21,304	22,028	21,417
E	Total area of rehabilitation at all operations at the end of the reporting period	8,791	9,145	10,023	10,783	11,653	12,370	12,337
F	Annual rehabilitation to disturbance ratio (C: B)	0.77	0.84	0.76	0.60	0.71	0.57	1.03
G	Overall proportion of disturbed land rehabilitated (E/(D+E))	32.7%	33.3%	34.9%	33.9%	35.4%	36.0%	36.5%
	Other Managed Land							
	Estimate of the total land held as biodiversity offsets	10,973	13,164	22,607	22,773	25,466	41,752	26,109
	Estimate of the total area of land managed for agricultural use (e.g. grazing, cropping, viticulture)	57,533	60,174	44,252	44,632	40,146	59,320	41,320
Note: MP refers to Mount Pleasant Operation. Other details relating to historical data can be viewed at the Dialogue website: http://www.nswmining.com.au/dialogue/latest-projects/land-management/rehabilitation-principles-and-commitments								

We kindly ask that members review the data provided and advise the Dialogue secretariat on how this information might best be presented to stakeholders.

Recommendation

- **JWG members review the preliminary data and advise the Dialogue secretariat on how this information might best be presented to stakeholders.**

FOR INFORMATION / DISCUSSION

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Agenda Item 5

CURRENT LAND MANAGEMENT PROJECTS AND OTHER LAND MANAGEMENT BUSINESS

Current projects:

Please see below for updates on the current Dialogue land management projects:

Grazing Study and ACARP proposals

The final report for the ACARP Project Number: C23053 A Study of Sustainability and Profitability of Grazing on Mine Rehabilitated Land in the Upper Hunter NSW has been published by ACARP and is available for review. It has been attached with these papers for reference. Short proposal applications for the 2018 round of ACARP funding closed on 2 May 2018. The Dialogue has not provided support to any new proposals at this stage.

The follow-on study, Project Number: C27030 Examination of Past and Present Mine Rehabilitation to Grazing Land as a Guide to Future received \$166,203 in funding through the 2017 ACARP funding grant process and has recently commenced. Currently, the project is finalising administrative details and seeking the information from mines. The Dialogue will continue to assist where possible to coordinate the involvement of industry and provision of data.

Rehabilitation Reporting and Principles

Please see **Agenda item 4** for more information.

Beneficial reuse of voids projects

No update. The Dialogue secretariat will incorporate information provided in these fact sheets in our ongoing communication and messaging regarding voids throughout 2018.

Awareness and promotion of rehabilitation in the Hunter Valley / Mine rehabilitation booklet

The UHMD secretariat has worked with the Department of Environment and Planning (DPE) to finalise the Mine Rehabilitation Booklet. Updated and additional case studies, as well as high quality photos have been included to give the booklet a more dynamic presentation. The Dialogue secretariat is working with DPE to launch the booklet with the Minister shortly and is awaiting a review by the Resources Regulator. The booklet will provide a great opportunity for stakeholders to learn more about various aspects of mine rehabilitation, with several Upper Hunter sites featured.

Other land management business:

Please find an update on several other items that may be of interest to the Dialogue Joint Working Group members below:

Senate Committee Inquiry into mine rehabilitation

The Senate Committee inquiry into mine rehabilitation was recently reopened with an expanded terms of reference. On 27 March 2018, the Senate resolved to vary the terms of reference to expand the inquiry to include consideration of the rehabilitation of power station ash dams, with submissions open until 18 April 2018. As a result, an additional 30+ submissions were received, as well as supplementary documents to organisations who had previously responded.

A tour of two Upper Hunter sites (Mangoola and Drayton South) also occurred in Mid-March to enable the Senate Committee to gain a better understanding of rehabilitation practices in NSW. Sites reported that these had been largely positive interactions with the Senators. The Senate also granted a further extension for the Committee to report by 22 August 2018.

FOR INFORMATION

**UHMD Joint Working Group - Water and Land Management
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Agenda Item 6

**PRESENTATION: MINE REHABILITATION VISUALISATION TOOL
Steve Barry & Hamish Aiken (Department of Planning & Environment)**

Background

The Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) is developing a mine rehabilitation visualisation tool, that is seeking to demonstrate what the Upper Hunter may look like in the future, and what future land uses will be present in the post-mining landscape. The scope of the initial phase of this project has been undertaken by DPE and Truescape, using industry rehabilitation GIS data to deliver a fully-formed resource by the end of the 2017/18 financial year, with a view to seek ongoing commitment for funding from the NSW government.

DPE was encouraged to seek community stakeholder feedback on the tool on other improvements that may be considered in the next stage of the project, if it is supported.

About the presenters

Steve Barry currently leads the Resources Policy team in the Department of Planning and Environment which focuses on the assessment, management, and regulation of mining impacts.

Hamish Aiken is a Principal Policy Officer in the Resources Policy team of the Department of Planning and Environment and is currently working on the development of the Department's mine rehabilitation policy reforms.

FOR DISCUSSION

UHMD Joint Working Group - Water and Land Management
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Agenda Item 7

STRATEGIC DISCUSSION ON DIALOGUE OBJECTIVES

Issue

The Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue (UHMD) was established in 2011 in response to community concerns about cumulative impacts of mining, a significant amount has been achieved. Recent feedback from stakeholders has shown concern that the Dialogue is at risk of becoming less relevant and not meeting the expectation of stakeholders.

Background

The Dialogue secretariat has prepared the **attached** 'Statement of Dialogue Objectives' to help the Dialogue ensure it stays relevant and meet expectations. In addition to the overarching goal to address the cumulative impacts of mining in the region, for the Dialogue to remain effective it needs to:

1. Engage with interested and relevant stakeholders across all sectors of the community to ensure that issues of importance can be discussed in an open, balanced, and respectful environment;
2. Facilitate projects that support any key issues raised by members, and which seek to support, maintain, or improve the quality of life for current and future residents;
3. Distribute information on relevant internal and external projects and initiatives to help improve the knowledge and awareness of mining-related matters amongst relevant stakeholders; and
4. Advocate to government and other agencies for action on matters of importance to the Dialogue and the Upper Hunter.

The JASC met on 16 May 2018 to discuss the feedback collected from Dialogue stakeholders at the earlier 2018 meetings, whereby members discussed the changing focus of the Dialogue, noting that while the key themes when the Dialogue was established were still important (i.e. air quality, land management, and water quality), a shift towards long-term planning for a post-mining landscape had occurred and that final land use, economic diversification and the need to focus on more effective communication with stakeholders were fast becoming a priority that the Dialogue needed to focus on.

To support these objectives, JASC and ISC members have endorsed a realignment of the Dialogue Working Groups as per below:

- Combine the existing Joint Working Groups for Land management & Water and Emissions & Health into a single 'Environment' focused group that includes all key environmentally-focused issues (note: this would continue to be supported by the Combined Industry Working Group, which will cover all environment issues - as is currently being done).
- Establish a new Communications Working Group (consisting of industry comms and technical specialists, and relevant community members) to help facilitate the Dialogue's objective to improve our communication and messaging to stakeholders; and
- Establish new Economic and Social Development Working Groups (for Joint and Industry) to focus on supporting projects that will build economic diversification and address other social factors of concern within the Upper Hunter, linking in with work that the local business chambers and councils are doing wherever possible.

A graphic of the proposed realignment of the Working groups is contained on the following page.

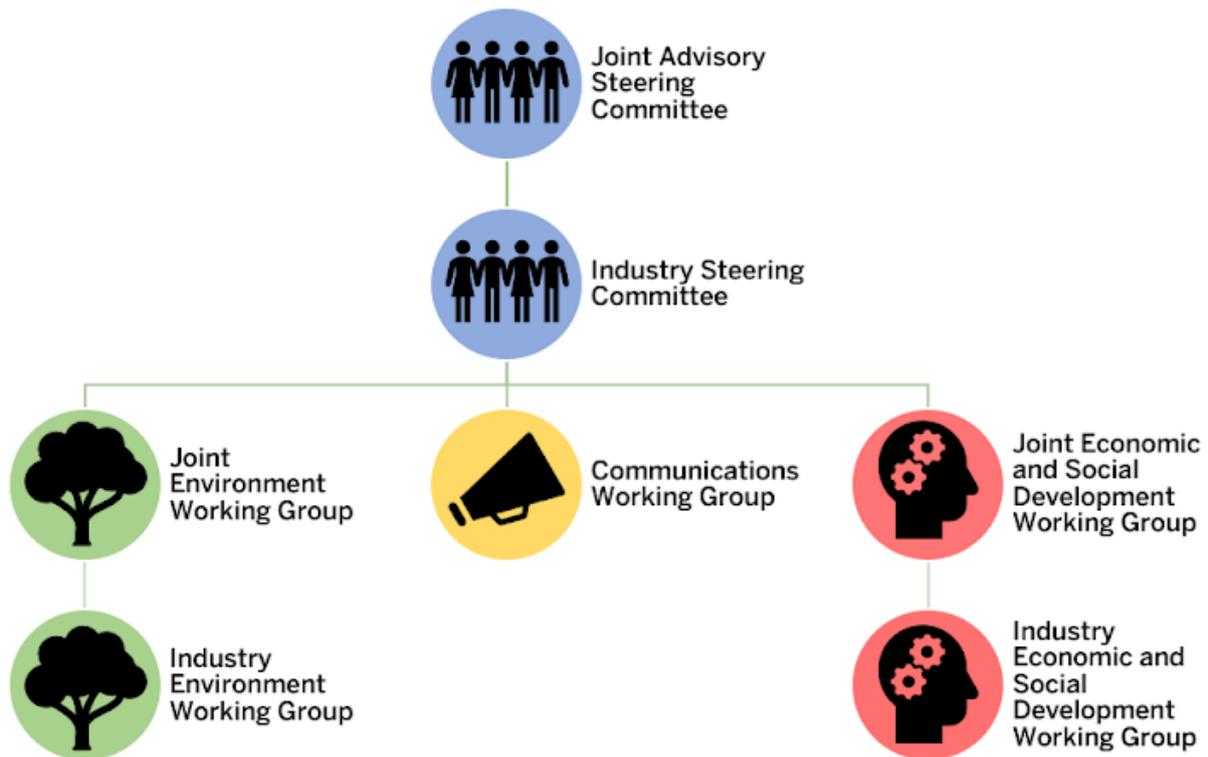


Figure: Proposed realignment of Dialogue Committee and Working Groups.

Industry and community members will be contacted to seek nominations for the Economic and Social Development Working Groups shortly. Industry membership for the Joint Working Group for the Environment will be comprised of the existing Joint Working Group member for both Land Management & Water and Emissions & Health, with the meeting to be staggered into separate sections enabling members to attend only for their relevant sections if this is desired.

Recommendation

- **JWG members note the proposed realignment of the Working Groups and provide advice of any potential issues or matters of relevance regarding the formation of the additional Working Groups within the Dialogue.**

FOR INFORMATION / DISCUSSION

Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue Statement of Objectives June 2018

Background

The Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue (UHMD) was established in 2011 in response to community concerns about cumulative impacts of mining. The UHMD is a collaborative effort that addresses the local community's priorities by understanding its concerns and then working together to develop and implement solutions.

Cumulative impacts of mining were identified throughout the workshops leading to the establishment of the Dialogue, and included the following themes:

1. Social impacts and infrastructure
2. Air quality, emissions and health
3. Water quality
4. Land management

The Dialogue has achieved a significant amount since 2011, as per the table below:

Land Management	Water	Emissions & Health	Social Impacts and Infrastructure / Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grazing Trials • Synoptic Plan Review • Rehabilitation Reporting and Principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunter River Water Quality Study • Annual Water Accounting Framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearing The Air video • Weather Forecasting project • Air Quality communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Housing Impact Study • Community research • School Mine Tours Program

The theme for Social Impacts and Infrastructure was discontinued following the development of a number of research projects that addressed the specific community concerns raised at that time and the general downturn in the mining industry. A number of additional adjustments to the Dialogue's working groups and committees was made through a restructure in 2017, which has enhanced the efficiency and productivity of the Dialogue.

Current recognition of the Dialogue (Strengths and Weaknesses)

The Dialogue receives a substantial amount of feedback each year through regular evaluation, which helps guide the Dialogue's priorities and how we should operate. This feedback has been summarised in the following

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables different stakeholders to come together to raise and discuss issues in an open, respectful environment. • Turns ideas into practical outcomes through developing projects to address identified issues. • Well regarded by government stakeholders as a valuable community liaison tool in the Upper Hunter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low awareness of Dialogue activities • May not be relevant to the concerns of the current Upper Hunter community • May not be seen to be achieving enough • May be seen as too insular and not enough varied involvement from stakeholders

Changing focus of the Dialogue

While the themes identified in 2011 (i.e. air quality, land management, and water quality) remain relevant to the Upper Hunter communities today, the Dialogue has been actively involved in major projects to address these issues and provide information to stakeholders. In recent years, Dialogue members have noticed a shift towards long-term planning for a post-mining landscape, including:

- **Future Land Use** - As many of the Upper Hunter operations progress towards the closure phase, there is an increasing concern of the long-term impacts from mining, taking into account the rehabilitation and development of voids and landscapes in the region. This has supported the Dialogue's advocacy for a Synoptic Plan review that provides the Upper Hunter with a vision for how rehabilitated mine land could be used beneficially post-mining.
- **Economic diversification and social factors** - The Dialogue is increasingly looking at opportunities for economic diversification in the Upper Hunter. Mining will be a large part of the region for the foreseeable future, however it is important that other economic opportunities be explored and considered to build resilience in mining communities and reduce any impacts of the potentially volatile and cyclical nature of industry that may be experienced. The Dialogue could play an active role in facilitating local enterprises given this is largely in line with the objective to support mining communities.
- **A greater focus on communications activities** - The Dialogue is developing targeted communications projects to highlight the key projects that have recently been undertaken to address issues that members have raised. It is important to sell these messages to our stakeholders as one of the Dialogue's main criticisms is that despite great outcomes being achieved, nobody knows much about it. Some members have suggested the Dialogue could benefit from a realignment of the working groups to be focused on a particular skill or function (i.e. Strategy, Projects, and Communications), rather than the environmental themes identified.

What are the Dialogue's key objectives?

The NSW Minerals Council provides a list of strategic objectives, one of which relates to supporting mining communities, with a specific action to: 'Ensure the Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue is relevant and meets expectations'.

In order to stay relevant and meet the community's expectations, the Dialogue needs to continue to be a collaborative effort between industry and the community that addresses the cumulative impacts of mining, by understanding the local community's concerns, and working together to prioritise, develop and implement solutions. To help with this key objective, the Dialogue should also aim to:

1. Engage with interested and relevant stakeholders across all sectors of the community to ensure that issues of importance can be discussed in an open, balanced and respectful environment.
2. Facilitate projects that support any key issues raised by members, and which seek to support, maintain or improve the quality of life for current and future residents; and
3. Distribute information on relevant internal and external projects and initiatives to help improve the knowledge and awareness of mining-related matters amongst relevant stakeholders.
4. Advocate to government and other agencies for action on matters of importance to the Dialogue and the Upper Hunter.

How do we achieve these objectives?

Solutions	Actions	Tools/Resources
Listen to stakeholders	Provide various opportunities to actively engage with the community and targeted stakeholders, to find out what their key issues or concerns are, and whether these align with the Dialogue's current priorities. Ensure Dialogue's continued attendance at key Upper Hunter community events.	Community engagement plan, Attendance at major community events
Communicate to stakeholders	Promoting Dialogue achievements, research findings and initiatives through a variety of methods. Key actions are to upgrade the website, and establish a social media presence.	Dialogue Communications Plan 2018, News articles on Dialogue website and external media (radio, tv, print), Social media
Be honest, transparent and responsive	Direct stakeholders to the Dialogue website, which is to be regularly updated with internal content, and links to external information (i.e. government). Actively encourage community groups to engage with the Dialogue and seek information if they are unable to source it.	Dialogue website, Attendance at major community events, Community Surveys.
Collaborate with relevant stakeholders	Liaise with relevant local and state government agencies, and business, environmental and interest groups to ensure the Dialogue has the appropriate representatives involved and continues to be regarded as one of the key community stakeholders in the Upper Hunter.	Regular meetings with key local and state government agencies, academic and research organisations, and major business, community, environment and industry groups in the region.
Meet community expectations	Regularly measure and evaluate the Dialogue's ability to meet expectations through feedback gained from discussions and satisfaction surveys.	Annual Forum, regular discussions with Working Groups on the Dialogue's performance, Surveys following events and at community shows.

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Agenda Item 8

SYNOPTIC PLAN REVIEW UPDATE

Issue

The process to review the Synoptic Plan continues following sustained advocacy from the Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue and the community to ensure that a future integrated land use plan remains a priority for the Upper Hunter region.

Background

Steve Wills from the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) provided a community update on the Synoptic Plan Review in Muswellbrook in mid-April 2018, as part of the Hunter Coal Festival. The update was reasonably well-attended by industry and other key stakeholders, however there was limited community representation. Feedback received from the community and industry called for the DPC to ensure that the review captured the strategic land use planning / post mining landscape.

The JASC and ISC have discussed the progress made to date with the plan review at the May 2018 meetings, noting that there are several competing government priorities such as the Hunter Regional Plan, that were driving the work plan for the government. JASC members encouraged the Dialogue Chair to meet with the DPC to encourage continued commitment to the Synoptic Plan review, raise concerns identified, and suggest improvements to help the review progress.

The Department of Planning and Environment's (DPE) mine rehabilitation visualisation tool (see **Agenda item 6**) has progressed considerably and fulfils many of the goals that the Dialogue has been advocating for the Synoptic Plan review to address.

A Synoptic Plan Workshop is scheduled for Friday 3 August 2018, which will provide an opportunity for targeted stakeholders across industry, state departments, business, local government, and community interest groups involved in the initial workshop to review the progress made and make recommendations on how the project should proceed. Key stakeholders will be notified of the workshop details shortly.

FOR INFORMATION / DISCUSSION

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Agenda Item 9

UPDATE ON COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITIES

Issue

The Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue continues to focus on several communication priorities in 2018.

Background

Please see below for an update on key activities:

A. General Communications Update

The Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue has had a busy start to 2018 in terms of communications activities. Key activities since the March meeting of the Joint Working Group include:

Media/communication plans:

- Attendance at four community events which collected a total of 78 surveys and involved a total of 192 interactions with people interested in the Dialogue. Events attended were the BHP Family Day at Muswellbrook Race Club on March 10 which collected 9 surveys from 20 interactions; Upper Hunter Show, March 16-17 (9 surveys from 20 interactions); Hunter Coal Festival's Singleton Community Day, April 7 (19 surveys/47 interactions) and Tocal Field Days, May 4-6 which was its usual busy event, drawing 41 surveys from 105 interactions
- The Dialogue expanded its display for the Hunter Coal Festival's Singleton Community Day to include a stronger focus on rehabilitation – this focus on rehabilitation is now included in all the Dialogue displays and is in answer to our surveys identifying rehabilitation as the single biggest issue for people completing the surveys. The Dialogue display at the festival was augmented by displays from most of the UHMD's industry partners which also focused on rehabilitation as well as their community involvement and overall operations.
- The Hunter Coal Festival with its messaging of "co-existence, community, innovation and education" also provided a good platform for Dialogue promotion including a presentation by Dialogue Chairman Dave O'Brien at the Mining Leaders Lunch on April 6, a community update on the review of the synoptic plan and rehabilitation regulations on April 13 as well as positive mentions at other festival events, in media articles and radio interviews.
- The 2018 School Mine Tours Program is now well underway. The next four months will see the primary schools' Year 5 students visiting mines followed by the high schools' Year 9 students touring in September, October, and November. All up, we have 29 tours scheduled across 13 sites in 2018. Mine guides for the May – July schedule have been trained to ensure Dialogue messaging is consistent across all tours.
- The communications team is currently developing its new social media plan and a direct community group engagement strategy.
- Work has also started on producing a Dialogue newsletter for June/July.
- The Dialogue has reviewed the website and prepared updates to various components to ensure the information provided is current and relevant for our stakeholders. Members are encouraged to visit miningdialogue.com.au for more information and to review the updates.

Recent Media:

As mentioned above, the Dialogue received numerous favourable mentions as part of the Hunter Coal Festival publicity through references in news articles, photos, and radio interviews. In direct articles, Fairfax and @thecoalface provided good coverage to:

- The release of the water accounting project's water usage by mines
- The Dialogue's call for more community representatives
- A lead up article for the focus on rehabilitation as the Singleton Community Day
- An article promoting the Synoptic Plan Review Community update in the Newcastle Herald.
- Ongoing coverage of the school tours program as the schools visit mine sites.

Community Engagement:

Upcoming community events include:

- NSW Mining HSEC Conference August 6-8
- Broke Village Fair September 9
- Singleton Show September 27-28

B. Community Engagement Plan

At the previous meeting, JASC members agreed that the Dialogue would benefit from developing a detailed community engagement plan to help guide the Dialogue's Chair and Secretariat as we attempt to re-engage with several former Dialogue stakeholders. A register of Dialogue stakeholder meetings could also be developed to log these briefings and be used to gauge when to re-engage with these groups in the future.

Please see **attached** on the following pages, a draft community engagement plan for reference. The Plan details the key stakeholders the Dialogue is seeking to meet with in 2018, who will meet with them, the type of interaction, what resources are needed, and which Dialogue members may be able to assist with the engagement.

The stakeholder engagement plan has been endorsed by both the JASC and ISC, with members committing to assist the secretariat where possible to help facilitate meetings. Of note for industry is the engagement with the various Community Consultative Committees. The Dialogue secretariat is seeking advice from industry members on how best to engage with the CCCs, and when.

C. General mine tours proposal

The Dialogue receives regular suggestions from stakeholders to initiate a general mine tours program for interested community members. Those providing feedback have noted that there is general lack of knowledge about the mining process within the community, and that mine tours for community members may provide significant value in raising awareness of what actually happens on a mine site.

In addition to the Dialogue's school mine tour program, many Upper Hunter sites have community open days in which site tours are offered, which provide an opportunity for the community to view mine sites.

Developing a general mine tours proposal was not supported by the JASC and ISC, with members noting the substantial commitments that industry already has in addition to the school mine tours program. The Dialogue secretariat will be seeking industry feedback regarding the amount of current and planned site tours to provide an indication on the amount of work already being done in this area. The Committees agreed that this proposal was something the Economics and Social Development Working Groups could explore further if sustained interest.

Recommendation

- **JWG members review the stakeholder engagement plan and provide any suggestions or recommendations that may help the Dialogue secretariat plan engagement in the remainder of 2018.**

FOR INFORMATION / DISCUSSION

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Stakeholder	Category	When	Who	Method of Engagement	Resources required	Notes
Bulga CCC	CCC	October	Secretariat	Face to face	Short Presentation	David O'Brien to assist
Ravensworth CCC	CCC	September/October	Secretariat	Face to face	Short Presentation	David O'Brien to assist
Liddell CCC	CCC	November	Secretariat	Face to face	Short Presentation	David O'Brien to assist
Mangoola CCC	CCC	August/November	Secretariat	Face to face	Short Presentation	David O'Brien to assist
Mount Owen Complex CC	CCC	September/October	Secretariat	Face to face	Short Presentation	David O'Brien to assist
United CCC	CCC	Septmeber	Secretariat	Face to face	Short Presentation	David O'Brien to assist
MTW CCC	CCC	August/November	Secretariat	Face to face	Short Presentation	Scott Fidler to assist
HVO CCC	CCC	TBC	Secretariat	Face to face	Short Presentation	Scott Fidler to assist
Ashton CCC	CCC	July/October	Secretariat	Face to face	Short Presentation	Scott Fidler to assist
Mt Arthur CCC	CCC	June/September/December	Secretariat	Face to face	Short Presentation	Sarah Withell to assist
Drayton CCC	CCC	June/September/December	Secretariat	Face to face	Short Presentation	Donna McLaughlin to assist
Rixs Creek CCC	CCC	November	Secretariat	Face to face	Short Presentation	Chris Knight to assist
Wambo CCC	CCC	August/December	Secretariat	Face to face	Short Presentation	Merri Bartlett to assist
Muswellbrook Coal CCC	CCC	June/September/December	Secretariat	Face to face	Short Presentation	Julie Thomas to assist
Mount Pleasant CCC	CCC	June/September/December	Secretariat	Face to face	Short Presentation	Ngaire Baker to assist
Bengalla CCC	CCC	August/November	Secretariat	Face to face	Short Presentation	Craig White to assist
Hunter Thoroughbred Breeders Association	Industry Association	TBC	Secretariat/Chair	Face to face	Briefing and Presentation	
Hunter Environment Lobby	Environment Group	TBC	Secretariat/Chair	Face to face	Briefing and Presentation	
NSW Farmers Association	Industry Association	TBC	Secretariat/Chair/Member	Face to face	Briefing and Presentation	Jim Morgan may assist
Hunter Valley Wine & Tourism Association/Alliance	Industry Association	TBC	Secretariat/Chair	Face to face	Briefing and Presentation	
Lock The Gate Alliance	Environment Group	TBC	Secretariat/Chair	Face to face	Briefing and Presentation	
Bulga Milbrodale Progress Association	Environment Group	TBC	Secretariat/Chair	Face to face	Briefing and Presentation	
Hunter Valley Protection Alliance	Environment Group	TBC	Secretariat/Chair	Face to face	Briefing and Presentation	
Singleton Chamber of Commerce	Business	TBC	Secretariat/Chair	Face to face	Briefing and Presentation	Gill Eason may assist
Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce	Business	TBC	Secretariat/Chair	Face to face	Briefing and Presentation	Gill Eason may assist
Hunter Joint Organisation of Councils	Local Government	TBC	Secretariat/Chair	Face to face	Briefing and Presentation	
Muswellbrook Race Club	Community	TBC	Secretariat/Chair	Face to face	Briefing and Presentation	Sarah Withell may assist
Upper Hunter Shire Council	Local Government	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter	
Cessnock City Council	Local Government	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter	
Singleton Rotary	Rotary Club	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter	
Muswellbrook Rotary	Rotary Club	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter	
All schools involved in School Mine Tour Program	Schools	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter	
Broke Bulga Landcare Group	Environment Group	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter	
Bylong Valley Protection Alliance	Environment Group	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter	
Conservation Volunteers Australia	Environment Group	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter	
Fauna and Flora International - Australia	Environment Group	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter	
Great Eastern Ranges Initiative	Environment Group	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter	
Greening Australia NSW	Environment Group	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter	

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Hunter Region Landcare Neterok	Environment Group	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
Merriwa Healthy Environment Group	Environment Group	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
Muscle Creek Landcare	Environment Group	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
Scone Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Business	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
Branxton Greta Chamber of Commerce	Business	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
Cessnock Chamber of Commerce	Business	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
Denman Chamber of Commerce	Business	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
Hunter Business Chamber	Business	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
Hunter Business Enterprise Centre	Business	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
Sparke Helmore Lawyers	Business	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
Gloucester Resources (ACMI Investments)	Industry	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
AGL Macquarie	Industry	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
CFMEU	Union	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
United Mineworkers' Federation of Australia	Union	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
AusIMM	Academia	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
Hunter Valley Research Foundation	Academia	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
Sustainable Minerals Institute	Academia	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
University of Newcastle (NIER, TFI, ICBLU)	Academia	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
Civeo	Development	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
Denman and District Development Association	Development	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
NSW Hunter Development Corporation	Development	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
Regional Development Australia - Hunter	Development	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
Urban Growth NSW	Development	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
Dept of Environment (Cth)	Government Dept	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
Housing NSW	Government Dept	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
Hunter Central Rivers Catchment Mgmt Authority	Government Dept	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
Local Land Services NSW	Government Dept	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
Division of Resources and Geoscience, DPE	Government Dept	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
Resources Regulator	Government Dept	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
NSW Department of Primary Industries & DPI Water	Government Dept	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
NSW EPA	Government Dept	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
NSW HHealth	Government Dept	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
Create NSW (Arts office)	Government Dept	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
NSW Office of Environment & Heritage	Government Dept	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
NSW Office of Water	Government Dept	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
Singleton Argus	Media	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
2NM	Media	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
Muswellbrook Neighbourhood Service	Community	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter
Muswellbrook PCYC	Community	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter

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Upper Hunter Community Services	Community	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter	
Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corp	Community	June 2018	Secretariat	Written	Newsletter	

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HUNTER RIVER WATER QUALITY STUDY

Issue

The revised report for the Hunter River Water Quality Study, undertaken in the latter half of 2017, has been provided to the Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue for review. It is important that industry consider the key findings of the report prior to release.

Background

As JWG members would be aware, the Dialogue sought to undertake a water quality study of the background concentration of metals and metalloids in both the Hunter River Salinity Trading Scheme (HRSTS) discharge sites and compare to the general background concentration at reference sites along the Hunter River. This study followed JWG discussions and a presentation from Richard Bush and was led by the University of Newcastle's International Centre for Balanced Land Use.

Overall, the results have shown that the metal and metalloid concentrations in the discharge dams were low across all sites. Levels for a few metals and metalloids exceeded guideline trigger values in a limited number of cases, in both discharge dams and Hunter River reference sites, indicating a natural background occurrence of these elements. Elevated levels of Nitrogen species and Arsenate were flagged as potential issues, although the study noted that these results would be well below the ANZEC trigger values in the downstream environment if these were discharged under a high-flow event.

Industry members discussed the preliminary results in February 2018, recommending that contextual information be added where relevant to the final report to better explain how the scheme operates and how elevated figures would impact with the scheme if discharged. Members noted that sampling was undertaken during a very dry period and is therefore representative of a scenario where evaporation may enhance the concentration of soluble elements in the discharge dams and recommended that information of this nature be noted in the report.

The Dialogue secretariat has discussed additional work with Professor Bush to address the identified nitrate issue. A revised proposal was submitted to the Dialogue secretariat for consideration, that seeks to assess and better understand the environmental relevance of elevated nitrogen in the HRSTS by investigating if this issue is unique to the storages, and whether the concentrations of nitrogen are likely to affect the downstream environment.

The JASC and ISC have discussed the final report in detail and have agreed that the nitrates issue might require further examination, and recommended the Dialogue develop a clear path forward to guide the release of the report and a future work program.

The Dialogue secretariat is liaising with the EPA to determine an agreed forward program of work prior to the report's release. This discussion is ongoing, and once an approach has been determined, the Dialogue secretariat will liaise with the Water Study Steering Committee to seek support for the approach.

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Agenda Item 11

BIOREGIONAL ASSESSMENTS UPDATE

Issue

The Commonwealth's bioregional assessments for the Hunter and Gloucester subregions have been released.

Background

The bioregional assessments are regional-scale hydrological models that assess the potential impact of planned new coal mines, or expansions of existing coal mines, on groundwater and surface water.

They are intended to support natural resources management and acknowledge that more detailed local information (e.g. site-specific models) are required to identify risks and assess impacts at a local level.

For the Hunter, regional-scale hydrological modelling indicates that an area of 2441 square kilometres could experience groundwater drawdown due to potential new mines or mine expansions. About three-quarters of this area overlaps modelled drawdown due to existing coal mines. About 1228 kilometres of streams and 102 square kilometres of groundwater-dependent ecosystems – mainly rainforests, forested wetlands, and wet and dry sclerophyll forests – are potentially affected by changes in groundwater or surface water.

The assessments focus on the "zone of potential hydrological change", which is the total area where there is at least a five per cent chance that additional coal resource development will result in potential changes in groundwater or surface water. The total area is 3,213 square kilometres in the Hunter and less than 250 square kilometres in Gloucester.

One result of note in the Hunter is that the 22 coal resource development projects modelled would result in a reduction of between 1% and 1.6% of mean annual flow in the Hunter Regulated River at Greta in the period 2013 to 2042. Mines would be required to be licensed for this incidental take.

Further information on the bioregional assessments for the two regions can be found here, with these regions expected to be added to the BA Explorer in the future:

- Hunter: <http://www.bioregionalassessments.gov.au/assessments/hunter-subregion>
- Gloucester: <http://www.bioregionalassessments.gov.au/assessments/gloucester-subregion>

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CURRENT WATER PROJECTS AND OTHER WATER BUSINESS

Current Projects

Please find below an update on the following Dialogue water projects.

Hunter River Water Quality Study

Please see **Agenda item 10** for more information.

MCA Water Accounting Framework

The collection of site water accounting data for the 2017 calendar year has been finalised, with all data now received. The Dialogue secretariat has once again engaged the services of Dayjil Fincham of Hydro Engineering & Consulting (HEC) to analyse the data received.

The Dialogue secretariat is seeking to clarify a few issues with received data and is awaiting the update of the NSW Water Register with 17/18 information, which is expected to be made available in early July. The Dialogue secretariat will work towards publishing the 2017 results in the same format of previous infographics as soon as the contextual information is received, and analysis of the results is finalised. The Dialogue secretariat will also prepare media content for the website and other external outlets once the results are known.

Hunter Valley Bioregional Assessment

Please see **Agenda item 11 for more information**

Other Water Business

NSW water reforms

The NSW Government has recently completed targeted community consultation on the NSW Water Reform Action Plan, which is aiming to deliver on its responsibility to ensure an equitable and transparent approach to the management of our water for current and future generations. An Exposure Bill was released, with several community information sessions seeking community input on policies covering:

- Water take measurement and metering;
- Transparency measures;
- Better management of environmental water; and
- Floodplain harvesting policy.

Throughout the consultation period, over 250 submissions were received, with 350 attendees from a wide range of stakeholders were involved in 20 consultation events between 13 March and 15 April 2018. Feedback received during the consultation period will help the NSW Government shape its policy positions and inform the implementation of the water reforms. Key themes identified through the feedback included:

- Need for improved regulation, compliance, and enforcement
- A focus on long-term environmental outcomes
- Strong support for metering of licensed take
- Improved clarity and simplicity on rules
- Clear and open communications on possible changes
- The need for a comprehensive public register that holds all water data in one place
- Cost effectiveness of reforms
- Staged roll-out of the reforms
- Consideration of potential impacts to existing entitlements

- Value of ongoing consultation
- Aboriginal representation and protection of cultural flows
- Differences between inland and coastal systems

Legislation was introduced into NSW Parliament in June 2018 via the Water Management Amendment Bill 2018. Several items flagged in the exposure draft of the Bill appear to not have been taken up in the final Bill.

The Plan is expected to be wrapped up by mid-2019, and this deadline is being driven by commitments in the federal legislation and the Murray Darling Basin Plan. Further, the proposed framework for non-urban water meters in NSW has been released with the policy due to be implemented through regulations that will be consulted on in the third quarter of 2018.

For information about the water reforms consultation and outcomes, please visit:
www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water-reform/consultation.

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GENERAL DIALOGUE MATTERS

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NEXT MEETING / MEETING CLOSE

The next Joint Working Group meeting date is scheduled for **Wednesday 26 September 2018**, and this will be held as the Joint Environment Working Group.