



NSW MINERALS COUNCIL
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AGENDA
NSW Minerals Council

UHMD Joint Working Group Meeting - Water

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

Thursday 6 August 2015: 10.00am-12.30pm

1. Welcome and apologies, new UHMD Resource Centre
2. Confirmation of the minutes and update on actions of the 7 May 2015 meeting
3. Establishment of Joint Advisory Steering Committee
4. Presentation from Office of Water Science - Bioregional Assessment Programme
5. Update on current projects
6. MCA Water Accounting Framework - 2014 Results
7. DRE project - Predictive Mine Water Use Tool
8. Engagement of Shane Davey and UHMD Communications Plan
9. Other business

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

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

DRAFT Minutes

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

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

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

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.

**NSW Minerals Council
UHMD Joint Working Water Meeting – 6 August 2015**

Agenda Item 3

ESTABLISHMENT OF A JOINT ADVISORY STEERING COMMITTEE

Issue

An Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue Joint Advisory Steering Committee (JASC) has been established, comprising three community representatives, three representatives industry and two from local government.

Background

The UHMD's Executive Oversight Committee wishes to deepen the engagement of the community with the Dialogue and build on the meaningful progress achieved so far. It is a strategic priority to have strong community representation and involvement on the JASC that guides the work of the Dialogue. By working together collaboratively, it is a strong belief of all involved in the Dialogue that the outcomes for all can and will be improved.

Expressions of interest were sought from members of the public interested in serving on the JASC via an advertisement published in the Singleton Argus and Muswellbrook Chronicle on Friday 17 July with nominations due by Monday 27 July. UHMD participants were alerted to the advertisement via a UHMD Newsletter.

The JASC will be comprised of nine representatives:

- Three (rotated) representatives from the eight mining companies represented on the ISC, including a Chair, who will be David O'Brien (Glencore). The other two industry representatives are yet to be confirmed.
- Three community representatives. Three nominations were received on time, who will be appointed subject to their signature of a code of conduct.
- Two representatives from local government (from both Singleton and Muswellbrook local councils - these have yet to be appointed).
- One representative from NSWMC to provide secretariat support.

The purpose of the JASC will be to:

- Shape through strategic advice the direction of the Dialogue, its purpose, outcomes and service to the community.
- Provide oversight of the activities of the Dialogue and insights on how to achieve the best outcomes.
- Ensure the Dialogue remains effective and valued by all stakeholders.
- Continually improve the Dialogue and its contribution to the community and industry.
- Promote awareness about the work of the Dialogue and strengthen confidence within the community that areas of importance are being well managed and taken seriously.

The first meeting of the JASC is likely to occur in mid to late August.

It is recommended that the Joint Working Groups and its members provide ongoing advice relating to Dialogue issues to the JASC by contacting its Chair or one of its representatives.

FOR INFORMATION

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Agenda Item 5

UPDATE ON CURRENT PROJECTS

MCA Water Accounting Framework

An update is provided in Item 6.

Engagement with Independent Expert Scientific Committee / Hunter Bioregional Assessment

A (draft) data register has been released for the Hunter Bioregion. The data register is an excel spreadsheet that provides a list of datasets used in the bioregional assessment, including the title, description and source of the information.

Anthony Swirepik from the Office of Water Science will be providing a presentation in Item 4.

Water Resources Map Project

DRE launched Common Ground in June 2015.

However NSWMC was disappointed to discover that DRE decided not to include water layers in the initial release.

NSWMC has approached DRE's Executive Director - Chris Yeats and Deputy Secretary - Kylie Hargreaves to raise this issue of a reversal of DRE's commitment to the water resources map. NSWMC has lobbied DRE seeking assurances that the necessary changes are made to incorporate water elements into version 2 of Common Ground. DRE's initial comment was that it was supportive of the inclusion of water layers if it did not result in any adverse implications for Common Ground.

Hunter River Water Quality Assessment Project

NSWMC is still awaiting EPA's review of the Hunter River Salinity Trading Scheme (HRSTS).

Beneficial reuse of voids

The scope of the water quality analysis project has been expanded to include the following voids:

- Liddell (Glencore)
- Ravensworth West (Glencore)

Clint McCullough from Golder Associates will be presenting to the JWG - Water and JWG - Land Management at the next meetings.

NSWMC has also been approached by the University of Newcastle to consider jointly funding an ARC Linkage project on voids. NSWMC will be meeting with Prof. Nanthi Bolan to discuss the scope of a possible project.

FOR INFORMATION

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Agenda Item 6

MCA WATER ACCOUNTING FRAMEWORK - 2014 RESULTS

Issue

All of the companies have prepared MCA Water Accounting Framework data for 2014.

Background

The 2014 MCA Water Accounting Framework results will be presented at the meeting.

FOR DISCUSSION

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Agenda Item 7

DRE PROJECT - PREDICTIVE WATER USE TOOL

Issue

The Division of Resources and Energy (DRE) will shortly commence work on a predictive water use tool that could potentially become a UHMD JWG - Water project.

Background

NSWMC has been approached by DRE to seek input industry input into a predictive water use tool, to be used during the planning phases of new mining projects.

The tool would estimate the quantity of surface water and groundwater that a particular mine would require (annually) based on aspects such as: its location (and climate), local water resources, resource type, mining method, size, depth etc.

The potential benefits of such a tool include:

- Certainty for regulators (DRE, NSW Office of Water, Department of Planning and Environment) about whether water use quantities would be manageable.
- Potentially reduced assessment timeframes for mining project proponents. It could also assist with water management planning.
- Information for community and other water users about the extent of water use implications. This may provide some assurance that any effects would be manageable.

To undertake the project, DRE would require water use and other information to be provided by mining companies. The information from the MCA Water Accounting Framework would be a key source of data.

NSWMC and DRE is considering whether there are potential benefits in delivering this project through the JWG - Water.

Recommendation

That the working group consider whether this project should be delivered as part of a UHMD JWG - Water project.

FOR DISCUSSION

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Agenda Item 8

ENGAGEMENT OF THERESOURCE AND UPDATING OF UHMD COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Issue

The UHMD Communications Plan is being reviewed and updated with a view to better promoting the project work of the Dialogue and making it more visible. Mr Shane Davey from *theresource* has been engaged to prepare and undertake many of the actions identified within the plan.

Background

In response to feedback received at the Annual UHMD Workshop in December 2014, the Executive Oversight Committee has decided to review the UHMD Communications Plan with a particular focus on better promoting the project work that the UHMD has undertaken and continues to undertake.

Mr Shane Davey from *theresource* was engaged to conduct a review of the existing UHMD Communications Plan and develop an updated plan for consideration by the Industry Steering Committee and the Joint Advisory Steering Committee. Mr Davey was specifically asked to provide ideas in areas:

- Cost effective ways to maximise the benefit that the industry obtains from its investment in the Dialogue.
- Options for proactively promoting the work of the Dialogue.
- Promoting and strengthening the UHMD brand within the Upper Hunter community.

Draft UHMD Communication Plan

An updated Communications Plan has been drafted and will be made available once finalised. The draft plan features an expanded range of communication activities which are divided into short and medium term initiatives. In addition the objectives of the plan have been more clearly articulated, together with a series of suggested performance measures.

FOR INFORMATION