

Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue

Stakeholder Workshop December 2012

Report



The Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue

The Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue is a new way for the community, government and the mining industry to work together in the Upper Hunter to address the cumulative impacts of the industry and the growth of the region. Participants in the Dialogue include: state and local government; community, environmental, business and agribusiness groups; and the nine coal producers of the region.

The 12 December 2012 Workshop

On 12 December 2012, 90 people from local community, environmental and business groups, the mining industry and state and local government, came together to discuss goals and projects to address cumulative impacts of mining in the Upper Hunter.

The workshop considered goals and projects in the areas of: water; emissions and health; social impacts and infrastructure; and land management. The goals and projects considered were arrived at by smaller, focus workshops with stakeholders held in July and August 2012.

The aim of the workshop was to share the goals and projects with all the groups involved in the Dialogue, to understand what those groups thought should be the outcomes of the projects and how they should be developed and communicated.

The workshop involved members of industry and stakeholders who were involved in the development of the projects and goals presenting those projects, followed by workshop sessions to discuss the projects. At the end of the day an open plenary was held to discuss ideas for working together in the future.

This Report

This report contains all the written feedback from the day. This feedback was captured at each table by a scribe and the group's priority answers were shared in the plenary. There were five discussion tables for each topic area.

The report also contains everything that was captured on the parking lot for the day. Issues that were raised that fell outside the goals and projects discussed were captured on the parking lot.

Finally this report contains ideas that were provided about how we can continue to work together in the future.

The report captures the answers to the workshop questions and, where necessary, some small edits have been made to ensure that the feedback can be understood by readers of this report. A draft of this report has been checked and approved by three of the participants who attended on the day.

Thankyou

Thanks to everyone who attended the workshop, for your time and the respectful and constructive spirit in which you approached the day.

We would like to acknowledge and give our special thanks to the following people:

- Wendy Bowman (NSW Mine Watch), John Drinan (Singleton Healthy Environment Group, Rebekah Gomez-Fort (Department of Primary Industries) and Gill Eason (Singleton Chamber of Commerce), who presented at the workshop.

- John Drinan (Singleton Shire Healthy Environment Group), John Kaye (Denman District Development Association) and Di Gee (Singleton Shire Healthy Environment Group) who reviewed this report in draft.

Next Steps

This report will:

- Assist with the development and implementation of the 12 projects, and in measuring their success by comparing the actual outcomes to the outcomes sought by the workshop participants
- Identify other groups that may be necessary to guide the development and implementation of the projects
- Assist us to design the program for the Dialogue in 2013
- Capture ideas that fall outside the current projects to be addressed through the Dialogue.

Session 1 and 2 – 12 Month Projects

During July and August 2012 workshops were held in the areas of: Water; Land Management; Emissions and Health; and Social Impacts and Infrastructure. All groups participating in the UHMD were invited to attend all four workshops. At the July/ August workshops the participants developed 5 year goals and 12 month projects designed to achieve those goals.

The purpose of sessions 1 and 2 of December Stakeholder Workshop was to understand what outcomes would need to be achieved from each project in order to successfully contribute to the 5 year goals, and how stakeholders and others should input and be able to keep track of the progress of the projects.

Land Management

Question 1	<i>What outcomes would you like to see for each project?</i>
<i>Grazing trial</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shared learning from project, with information to be communicated publicly ▪ Soil carbon as a parameter to measure and native grasses (density, diversity incorporated) ▪ How much randomisation, statistical soundness, robustness, able to be replicated. This will be important for the credibility of the project and needs to be addressed in the design of trial ▪ Seasonal variation needs to be considered ▪ Find what issues are and make recommendations about future practises ▪ What sort of country are you making / what are the economics? ▪ Learn the lessons / work with universities ▪ Carrying capacity optional ▪ What is a strategic/ optimal/ sustainable grazing regime ▪ Ongoing monitoring and baseline (pastures/soil/animal health) ▪ Optimal timing for stocking rehabilitation ▪ Comparison data across rehabilitation versus unmined - profitability/ sustainable, pasture, soil, animal health, weight gain/ fertility (performance parameters) ▪ Long term trial/ not just 1-2 years (what is optimal duration?) – minimum 2 years or 3 plus years ▪ Who will manage the trial? ▪ Size of the trial? Number of replicates? ▪ Grazing to be comparable to current farm – not to be token ▪ Appropriate breed of cattle to be used ▪ Need to be realistic of the expectations – degraded sites prior to mining (i.e. need to take into account the pre-mining capability of the land) ▪ Need to consider the age of the rehabilitation ▪ Clear collaboration with cattle grazing industry – two way education ▪ Rigorous outcomes – i.e. measurable ▪ Guidelines to deliver quality grazing land ▪ The ability to promote that industry can return land to a state that is sustainable for grazing ▪ Blood testing of stock and soil testing for essential minerals ▪
<i>Establish biodiversity reference sites</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analogue sites for multiple communities which can be referenced in all/ most MOP's ▪ Give parameters that can be measured ▪ Identify different areas ▪ Locating 'pristine' sites

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify what is the goal e.g. pre-European or pre-mining ▪ Level of detail/ achievable benchmarks ▪ Time is an issue ▪ A number of representative sites / natural state (as close as possible to pre-mining condition) ▪ Inventory of existing remnants – mapping ▪ Consideration of connectivity ▪ Healthy remnant versus existing remnant ▪ Outcomes on a strategic scale (not mine site by mine site) – regional/ catchment/ sub catchment ▪ A clear measure of success, rehabilitation methods to be amended to achieve targets ▪ Identification of the types of reference sites required ▪ Clear measures of what can be assessed to achieve the criteria ▪
<i>Rehabilitation principles</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public information on how mines are progressing ▪ Updated regularly (6 monthly) ▪ Determine ‘strategic’ visual aspects ▪ More assessment of temporary cover ▪ Agreed commitment on principles which mining companies are accountable to ▪ Consistency and performance across mines ▪ Need to focus on outcomes rather than only process ▪ Needs to be integrated into future strategic plans – with surrounding land use e.g. Synoptic Plan, regional mapping
Question 2	<i>How can we ensure Stakeholders can easily keep track of and input to the progress of the project?</i>
<i>Grazing trial</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Site visits to trial sites (who?) ▪ Periodic updates on trial – at minimum of annually ▪ Website – page on NSWMC ▪ Regular Workshop/ Working Group meetings
<i>Establish biodiversity reference sites</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public information on why and how operations are progressing. Also what process was followed. ▪ Regular workshops with stakeholders ▪ Various tools – e.g. NSWMC website, papers, integrated flyers
<i>Rehabilitation principles</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public reporting updated regularly (every 6 months)(publicly accessible)
<i>General</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ First need to identify stakeholders/ need to understand how local stakeholder groups communicate ▪ Newsletters ▪ Field days ▪ Subscribe to method ▪ Website ▪ Media releases – advertise activities ▪ Via website (NSWMC)? ▪ Catchment Management Authority networks ▪ Community Consultative Committee process ▪ Reference sites incorporated into mine site documents and reference material ▪ Workshop / Stakeholder update (NSWMC UHMD Forum) ▪ Field Day

Question 3	<i>Other issues?</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The need for realistic expectations e.g. challenges in re-establishing native communities ▪ Alignment of rehabilitation outcomes with existing remnants ▪ Consistent point for reporting of quality of progress of rehabilitation across various mine sites ▪ Comparison of land uses i.e. is grazing the best use of land post mining ▪ Review of current biodiversity offset policy

Emissions and Health

Question 1	<i>What outcomes would you like to see for each project?</i>
<i>Develop a communications strategy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Web repository for all research works ▪ Regular sessions with regulatory bodies to inform community of research ▪ Improved communication through local media ▪ Informing local hall committees as well as Community Consultative Committees (CCCs) ▪ Communication of program to community and stakeholders (government, rest of industry) is key. Seminars and other face-to-face means suggested ▪ Sharing of information through Community Consultative Committees ▪ Local media + social media as key engagement tools ▪ Engagement of school students and concerned community members in environmental management principles ▪ Needed to be non-industry ▪ Collaboration on Communications Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Material – snapshot – Process – ownership – Timeline – Studies – what try to answer – Outcomes and what it means to “Joe Blow” ▪ Workshop 2013 (update/results)
<i>Weather forecasting/management actions project</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need for Trigger Action Response Plans (TARPs) ▪ Importance of consistency across mines to minimise dust emissions – gives confidence to the community ▪ Common set of principles across the board ▪ Community need to know all mines are responding in the same way ▪ Consistency between quarries and mines in response to dust emissions ▪ Mines to use radio (or communicational portal) to know what’s happening / air quality alert ▪ Formalised agreement between all mines to implement the project ▪ Consistent template for standardised actions ▪ Commitment to use the template to adapt the process to other emissions ▪ 12 month review and ongoing via CCCs ▪ Coordinated outcomes with the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) – aligned process and integrated & each mine with a documented policy/program

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessment and refinement of policy/programs to drive ease of interpretation and consistency ▪ Early warning system of bad weather for the community's information ▪ Criteria for establishing effectiveness of mitigation measures ▪ Measure the impact of the project as a whole ▪ Communicate the impact of the project ▪ Looking at individual weather incidents: coordinate and communicate process to/with operators, communicate impact of intervention ▪ Operational activity on each site (in operational licence) ▪ Does this need to be communicated? to Public: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The initial project & outcomes? – As an ongoing basis? Pros-Cons (e.g. like a Graziers Alert – not necessarily beneficial)
Question 2	<i>How can we ensure Stakeholders can easily keep track of and input to the progress of the project?</i>
<i>Develop a communications strategy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dedicated website page for the project ▪ A 'flyer' or 'fact sheet' to disseminate to broader community about where to find government data and receive text messages or emails (asthma sufferers can go on a list to receive text messages but who knows about it?) ▪ One-stop shop webpage where people can go to find information on projects, research, communication tools, data etc. per project ▪ Use current/existing mechanisms e.g. various mediums (newspaper, radio, web, SMS etc) ▪ Need to identify key coordinator of communications. – perhaps Local Govt. considering NSWMC represents mining industry ▪ Community input in UHMD – advertise/promote members of steering group (Emissions & Health) ▪ Credible one stop shop e.g. council website – links to research
<i>Weather forecasting/management actions project</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need for a community-industry joint working group ▪ Broader communication strategy (different audiences, need different communication approach e.g. websites, radio update, emails, text messages, newspaper)

Water

Question 1	<i>What outcomes would you like to see for each project?</i>
<i>MCA Water Accounting Framework project</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consistently applied across industry ▪ Provide confidence that water reporting is accurate ▪ Identify net use of water by industry in the region ▪ Understanding when the framework fits in broader water issues – e.g. impact assessment ▪ Consistency and transparency ▪ Identify opportunities to improve water efficiency – e.g. sharing between mines; recycling ▪ Ability to benchmark against peers ▪ Ability to achieve/share best practice water management ▪ Ability to identify opportunities to reduce fresh water use ▪ Language that communicates performance simply

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quantitatively and ethically robust – trusted/proven ▪ Communicate objectives & outcomes ▪ Use results to better manage and utilise water resources. Identify better usage ▪ Reporting to be in terms understandable to man on the street ▪ No more contamination/deterioration/destruction of ground water, esp. Shallow alluvial – water disappearing ▪ How much water goes in/out? ▪ How much is lost? ▪ Better use of water; less water lost ▪ Ability to compare site performance against best practice ▪ Transparent measurement system ▪ How can we share water better? ▪ Common method of recording information
<p><i>Investigate the proposed work of the Commonwealth Independent Scientific Committee (IESC) in the Hunter Valley</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community input into the scope of the IESC’s project in the Hunter ▪ Need to think of alternative (can’t let it drag on) project in water space for UHMD – voids? ▪ Consider impacts of mine water discharge on downstream sites e.g. RAMSAR wetlands ▪ Use the Australian Coal Association Research Program (ACARP) to do studies ▪ Knowledge of ground water systems / mapping of ground water ▪ Ground water quality ▪ Loss of ground water resources ▪ Consult with NSW Farmers on Strategic Regional Land Use Policy and Aquifer Interference Policy ▪ Output from Hunter Usage Project be supplied to IESC to influence direction of Committee ▪ Revisit action items from 2011 workshop ▪ Information gaps ▪ Make decision ▪ Letter to IESC with our priorities in 2013: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Letter to IESC – UHMD, contact – New projects? – Industry – community steering group
<p>Question 2</p>	<p><i>How can we ensure Stakeholders can easily keep track of and input to the progress of the project?</i></p>
<p><i>MCA Water Accounting Framework project</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consistent approach to reporting – compare ‘apples with apples’ across mines ▪ Web based reporting – allow community to interrogate data ▪ Make data accessible/understandable ▪ Explain framework before results are released ▪ Newsletters / media ▪ Workshops ▪ Go to groups – (NSW Farmers) impact of project on stakeholders ▪ Industry–Community steering group ▪ Consistency and performance comparison
<p><i>Investigate the proposed work of the Commonwealth Independent Scientific</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have IESC present at future UHMD events ▪ Water bills ▪ Newsletter ▪ Communications strategy needs to be two-way

<i>Committee in the Hunter Valley</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Request spots at organisations' meetings – Catchment Management Authority, Hunter Valley Water Users Association
Question 3	<i>Other issues</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Helping farmers switch from saline water sources to fresher water sources ▪ Future shape of hunter valley - relationship with water ▪ Voids

Social Impacts and Infrastructure

Question 1	<i>What outcomes would you like to see for each project?</i>
<i>Housing Research Project</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider outcomes – short term/temporary residency (e.g. army base with additional housing infrastructure), and long term/permanent residency ▪ Structure solutions to type of demand (i.e. an unforeseen event in the Hunter region that would lead to a increased workforce and housing demands e.g. the commissioning of Bayswater Power Station in mid-1980s that led to a sudden increase in the demand for housing) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Drive in–Drive out to be considered ▪ Real estate agent (utilise local expertise) to be included in the group? ▪ How to ensure implementation (property developer buy-in) ▪ Coordination with the Department of Planning to ensure study outcomes will be utilised ▪ Regional outcome that integrates across all three shires (Muswellbrook, Upper Hunter, Singleton) ▪ Ensure research considers existing research available from a broad range of sources (including, Department of Planning strategies) ▪ Ensure research results are not too broad – need to first identify the extent of the issue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Now and in the next 10+ years ▪ Help to inform Government and developers ▪ What does local planning allow for in relation to housing development? ▪ Project should inform local planning and be sensitive to current context (consideration of geographic context, planning context, local market conditions and demographic and population characteristics) ▪ Project needs to consider the cyclic nature of the industry and account for fluctuations with flexibility ▪ Explore accommodation solutions implemented by other mining towns (e.g. QLD/WA) ▪ Sustainable industry to support long term housing solutions ▪ Shared responsibility and accountability ▪ Recommendations are implemented collaboratively by all stakeholders (including, all levels of government, not for profit housing and community service organisations, private housing developers and providers, and resource associated companies) ▪ Regional plan in light of the recommendations ▪ Understand potential obstacles and roadblocks to a plan and commitment to unlocking the roadblocks ▪ Consider all levels of accommodation are included in the scope (e.g. public housing, not for profit housing, workforce accommodation, private housing) ▪ Develop and finalise scope of work and share with stakeholders

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What do we do with report outcomes? Who is responsible? ▪ Understand what drives the problem (housing needs and impacts) and provide recommendations on mitigating and managing these impacts ▪ Understand the restriction and identify the opportunities ▪ Baseline understanding
<i>Infrastructure Roadshow</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clearer outcomes e.g. success stories ▪ Clear criteria and purpose for meeting ▪ Better understanding of industry impacts on infrastructure and also opportunities for local suppliers ▪ Better information and more effective advocacy for public infrastructure funding for the region – and potential project priorities ▪ Broad regional roadshow coverage and involvement of RDA (Regional Development Australia) Hunter ▪ Scope total infrastructure needs in order of priority ▪ Traffic/road infrastructure issues in the short term should be included (Singleton/Muswellbrook bypasses) ▪ Clearer outcomes in relation to health, education and culture ▪ Better communication of these events (prior and post meeting – e.g. advertising in local media) ▪ Support/tools – how to better communicate to broader community so community/business groups can disseminate information ▪ Potential ‘follow-ups’ with community/business groups (to ensure continued engagement with stakeholders) ▪ Plan for 2013 and beyond ▪ Understand ‘make up’ of community when planning and delivering roadshow events (e.g. time of events, location, notification) ▪ Communication tools e.g. newsletter or feedback sheet after roadshow / Information flyer for roadshow ▪ Link outcome (results) to ideas so community groups/ industry can be better informed ▪ Building relationships ▪ ‘Strength in numbers’ advocacy ▪ More money back to regions
Question 2	<i>How can we ensure Stakeholders can easily keep track of and input to the progress of the project?</i>
<i>Housing Research Project</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publicise problems and solutions ▪ Workshop scope and outcomes ▪ Release of results requires communications plan ▪ Regular progress reports (quarterly? half-yearly?) ▪ Website/newsletter/community group meetings ▪ Circulate scoping study (opportunity for public input) ▪ Post workshop with Stakeholders ▪ Establish ‘feedback loop’ strategy
<i>Infrastructure Roadshow</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Follow-ups – present successes (e.g. local procurement example) ▪ Greater engagement with local councils ▪ Local pre and post event communications plan (including local print, radio and social media networks) ▪ Engage with a range of community groups and communicate what we are doing ▪ Summary of outcomes and learning’s to be communicated to the wider community via website/local media/newspaper/radio ▪ Benchmark against other mining communities (e.g. QLD/WA) ▪ Website update on each of the UHMD projects

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Newspaper (or other form of communication) for non internet users (e.g. page in paper, industry newsletter, local community group meetings)▪ Social media▪ Identifying broader range of groups (e.g. Singleton Beef and Land Management Association)
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Session 3 – Working Together

This session was carried out in plenary with all participants in the workshop. Feedback is captured below:

- Website
- Be clear who is involved in working groups
- Use community groups to spread the message
- Flyers/factsheets to help others communicate
- Spread link to Health website
- All in workshop is good – but need more time to speak/share
- Each issue – have a day where can think/talk about the issue
- Need to do both – focussed workshops and all-in – bring it back together
- Need to make sure process doesn't get in the way of progress
- Face to face meetings are very important
- Outside – inside focus
- More focus on prevention.

Parking Lot

Any issues that arose during the workshop discussion that feel outside of the projects being considered was captured on a parking lot. These issues will be considered by the relevant working groups:

- Broader interaction e.g. Beyond business
- Beneficial use of mine water
- Opportunities to assist community to understand access to best quality water tomorrow
- Voids
- Dedicated website that aggregates the information of the mines
- Biodiversity offsets – policy on this goes too far and starts to displace productive agricultural land. Need to consider long term land management and long term use, long term strategy.
- Grazing – soil should be tested and ameliorated
- Weeds on mine haul roads should be addressed
- Projects – will these fed into land use planning for the region i.e. provide certainty for land tenure and industry/ investment community
- Roads – including to Mudgee
- Movement of skilled people out of the other industry into the mines
- Shape of landscape – sculpting of spoil
- Noise standards and commitments
- UHMD – should be a process with commitments for industry members. What happens if don't keep commitments
- Sharing roads with farmers.

Participation in the Workshop

All groups that have participated in the Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue were invited to take part in the workshop. The following organisations were represented:

Anglo American	NSW Farmers
Association of Mining Related Councils	NSW Mine Watch
BHP Billiton Mt Arthur Coal	NSW Minerals Council
Bloomfield Collieries	Office of Environment and Heritage
Hunter Thoroughbred Breeders Association	Peabody Energy
Denman Chamber of Commerce	Rio Tinto Coal & Allied
Denman District Development Association	Rix's Creek CCC
Hunter Business Enterprise Centre	Singleton Beef and Land Management Association
Hunter Medical Research Institute	Singleton Chamber of Commerce
Hunter Region Landcare Network	Singleton Council
Hunter Valley Water Users' Association	Singleton Shire Healthy Environment Group
Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority	The Great Eastern Ranges Initiative
Merriwa Healthy Environment Group	Umwelt
Muswellbrook Shire Council	Upper Hunter Shire Council
Namoi Catchment Management Authority	Vale Integra Coal Operations
NSW Department of Health	Wambo CCC
NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure	Wybong Action Group
NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet,	Xstrata Coal
NSW Department of Primary Industries	Ashton Coal Operations
NSW Department of Trade and Investment,	Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority
Regional Infrastructure and Services	