

MINUTES

Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue Joint Environment Working Group Meeting

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

Wednesday 10 June 2020: 10.00 am to 11.20 pm

Attending:

Paul Amidy (Chair)	Glencore
Andrew Reid	MACH Energy Mount Pleasant Operation
Glenda Briggs	Regional NSW (Regions, Industry, Agriculture and Resources)
Cameron Archer	The University of Newcastle
Julie Thomas	Muswellbrook Coal Company
Bill Baxter	Yancoal
Jeff (R.J.) Esdaile	Community member
Mary-Anne Crawford	Singleton Council
Neville Hodkinson	Singleton Shire Healthy Environment Group
Lisa Richards	BHP
Sharon Pope	Muswellbrook Shire Council
Ned Stephenson	Glencore
Chris Knight	The Bloomfield Group
Matthew Newton	Resources Regulator
Ken Bray	Hunter Valley Water Users Association
Bob Mackie	theresource
James Barben	NSW Minerals Council
Craig Milton	NSW Minerals Council

Apologies

Carolyn Herlihy	Hunter New England LHD
Daniel Lewer	Hunter Land Management
Adam Gilligan	NSW Environment Protection Agency
Jo Powells	Local Land Services
Jim Morgan	Wybong Action Group/NSW Farmers Federation
Peter York	Thiess
Simon Francis	DPI Water

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed all attendees and noted the apologies received. Mr. Barben thanked all for joining via Zoom and teleconference.

2. Minutes from Previous Meeting

The minutes for the previous meeting were accepted, except for one recommended change to the previous meeting's minutes.

In agenda item 11 - Dr. Hodkinson's presentation, the Dialogue secretariat is to update the passage that refers to 'minimisation dispersion', as "**minimisation of pollution and dispersion**" instead. The minutes will be amended and recirculated for approval.

Action:

- **Dialogue secretariat to review and edit previous minutes to reflect Dr. Hodkinson's advice regarding 'minimisation of pollution and dispersion'**

3. Update on COVID-19 and impacts on Dialogue projects and activities

Mr. Barben updated members on the Dialogue's approach to COVID-19, and the impact this has had on a variety of the Dialogue's engagement activities, primarily the School Mine Tours Program and attendance at community events.

Given the ongoing restrictions regarding public gatherings may impact the Dialogue's ability to host working group meetings for the September round of meetings, members encouraged the Dialogue to consider alternative methods of engaging and communicating with stakeholders. Ms. Crawford advised that Singleton Council could act as a short-term replacement meeting venue to adhere to current restrictions which the Dialogue secretariat was open to exploring further.

Comments regarding the Air Quality report made under this agenda item have been included below in the discussion for agenda item 4.

4. Update on Emissions and Health Projects

Mr. Milton provided a brief overview of the Air Quality project. The Dialogue secretariat has recently received peer review comments from Melita Keywood from the CSIRO and will seek to work through these with the report's authors at ERM to ensure these are reflected in the final report. Members were keen to review this feedback and the Dialogue secretariat agreed to share this report with members.

Dr. Hodkinson noted that the 'community perceptions' and addressing perceptions on impacts to health is key to the issue of community engagement. Dr. Hodkinson advised that responses from the government and industry have not met these community expectations to date, and was concerned that the draft report as is, may create confusion in the community and open the Dialogue up to criticism.

Dr. Hodkinson shared that he had provided a response to the initial report and suggested this be shared with members, as it outlined various issues. While the air may appear to be cleaner than it once was, this is not necessarily reflected in this analysis of PM2.5 and PM10 data. Mr. Barben agreed that there may be an issue with a mismatch between the timescales.

Dr. Hodkinson advised that he felt the work that Matt Riley and DPIE-EES was undertaking was bridging between the minimisation of pollution and dispersion project and the Dialogue's Air Quality study. When queried if the DPIE-EES work would be useful in responding in a more rapid time frame, Dr. Hodkinson agreed this has been useful and is a step in the right direction, though noted Mr. Riley and his team would need more time to come out with a more refined product.

Other feedback from members was positive and noted that we can only work with the data that is available.

Dr. Hodkinson advised that if the Dialogue's report included a statement about the limitations of the study, this may go some way to benefiting the report, as its current design will only tell the one story despite the peer review's comments. Mr. Barben accepted these concerns and the Dialogue secretariat would be looking into this issue further.

ACTION:

- **Dialogue secretariat to distribute Melita Keywood (CSIRO) peer review comments to the Joint Environment Working Group members.**
- **Dialogue secretariat to distribute Dr. Hodkinson's comments regarding the initial report to the Working Group for review.**

5. Update on Land Management Projects

Mr. Milton advised that the Dialogue was close to finalising the rehabilitation and disturbance data for 2019.

Mr. Newton (Resources Regulator) advised that COVID-19 has impacted RR's ability to finalise the

Operational Rehabilitation Reforms regulation, however he expected these would go out in the next few weeks for review, over a six-week consultation period. Mr. Newton advised the reforms are similar to those in 2018/19, however instead of imposing these by way of title conditions, these would be facilitated by an amendment to the regulation instead.

Members encouraged the RR to consult with external communities in a tailored manner to ensure they understand the reforms (e.g. key changes and the effectiveness of the new regulation and how it will benefit the Upper Hunter community). Mr. Newton advised that the reforms would be consulted along the lines of the regular gazetting process and would involve engagement with all key stakeholders, and that this would be communicated through the Mine Rehabilitation News subscription newsletter service, as well as a webinar.

Mr. Newton also updated members on the 'Mine Rehabilitation News', a new environmental newsletter the RR is producing, and encouraged members to subscribe for the latest updates. Industry members advised of registration issues for those who had already subscribed to the Safety news service, which Mr. Newton advised he would be following up. Member can subscribe to the Mining Sustainability Matters newsletter here:

<https://nsw.us2.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=d8b64a3fbc7f2ff2db8ec673b&id=6d7810af78>

Mr. Newton advised that the rehabilitation GIS portal is live, however the RR is awaiting regulation to publish this information. They are seeking voluntary submission of data from sites until such time that it becomes mandatory to provide. Members agreed that the publishing of this data will increase transparency of mine rehabilitation progress, with Mr. Barben noting this is the logical next step of the Dialogue's annual reporting project.

Industry members queried whether the system would automatically update to the latest available data, or if there would be a note within the portal advising when the data displayed was entered into the system. Mr. Newton advised that once the portal is mandatory, companies will be more confident that their data is accurate and that what is displayed is the most recent and correct data. Mr. Newton expected that within the next 12 months, all operations will be reporting rehabilitation data through this portal and would be happy to discuss with any interested parties further offline.

Mr. Reid provided a brief update on the work that Mount Pleasant Operations is undertaking with Firesticks Alliance regarding cultural burns on their site. MPO is currently in discussions with the RFS and is on track to start burns on a 25-ha area to the North West of their operations in the coming months.

ACTION:

- **Dialogue secretariat to share the link to register for the Resource Regulator's Mine Rehabilitation News subscription service.**

6. Update on Water Projects

Mr. Milton and Mr. Barben updated members on the two main water projects, the Water Accounting Framework annual project, and the HRSTS Water Quality Study, with both projects awaiting data to finalise.

7. Update on Communications Activities

Mr. Milton provided an update on the Dialogue's planning for a website upgrade and what this will likely involve.

Mr. Newtown also advised of a new summary video showcasing rehabilitation at various NSW sites, including those in the Upper Hunter which has recently been released. Please click the following link to view: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWYkINHEEZQ&feature=youtu.be>

Mr. Mackie updated members on the Dialogue's other engagement and communications activities. While COVID-19 has impacted the ability to attend community events, the Dialogue has been working to increase communications during this time, including enhancing social media planning and expediting the release of the revamped 'The Dialogue' newsletter.

8. Update on Dialogue Working Groups and Committees

Other Working Group updates were noted by members.

9. Other Business

No other business was raised.

10. Next Meeting / Close

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 9 September 2020. The Dialogue secretariat will be reviewing the COVID-19 restrictions for public gatherings and will determine how best to undertake this meeting, although we anticipate this will likely continue as a face to face meeting by this time, albeit potential in a different venue. We will update members closer to the meeting.

The meeting closed at 11:10 AM.

Actions arising from meeting UHMD Joint Environment Working Group Meeting

Action	Responsibility	Status
Minutes from previous meeting		
Dialogue secretariat to review and edit previous minutes to reflect Dr. Hodkinson's advice regarding 'minimisation of pollution and dispersion'	Dialogue secretariat	Completed
Air Quality report		
Dialogue secretariat to distribute Melita Keywood (CSIRO) peer review comments to the Joint Environment Working Group members.	Dialogue secretariat	Completed
Dialogue secretariat to distribute Dr. Hodkinson's comments regarding the initial report to the Working Group for review.	Dialogue secretariat	Completed
Resources Regulator Mine Rehabilitation News subscription		
Dialogue secretariat to share the link to register for the Resource Regulator's Mine Rehabilitation News subscription service.	Dialogue secretariat	Completed