

AGENDA

Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue

Joint Environment Working Group

Wednesday 10 June 2020, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm

Join via Zoom video - details below:

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By dialing in on your phones - details below:

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Meeting ID: 844 4494 0214

No.	Item	Attachment
1.	Welcome and Apologies (5 mins)	
2.	Minutes and actions of the previous meeting (5 mins)	
3.	COVID-19 Update and Impacts on 2020 Projects and Activities (20 mins)	Yes
4.	Update on Emissions & Health Projects (20 mins)	Yes
5.	Update on Land Management Projects (20 mins)	
6.	Update on Water Projects (20 mins)	
7.	Update on Communications Activities (10 mins)	
8.	Update on other Dialogue Working Groups/Committees (10 mins)	
9.	Other Business (5 mins)	
10.	Next Meeting & Close (5 mins)	

**Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue
Joint Environment Working Group - 10 June 2020**

Agenda Item 2

DRAFT 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 11 March 2020: 9.00 am to 11.55 am

Attending:

Paul Amidy	Glencore
Chloe Annandale	MACH Energy (Mount Pleasant Operation)
Mitchell Bennett	NSW Environment Protection Authority
Ken Bray	Hunter Valley Water Users Association
Glenda Briggs	Regional NSW (R.I.A.R.)
Jeff (R.J.) Esdaile	Community member
Neville Hodgkinson	Singleton Shire Healthy Environment Group
Sharon Pope	Muswellbrook Shire Council
Lisa Richards	BHP
Sarah Roberts	Singleton Council
Julie Thomas	Muswellbrook Coal Company
Ned Stephenson	Glencore
Craig White	Bengalla Mining Company (via teleconference)
Peter York	Thiess
Bob Mackie	theresource
James Barben	NSW Minerals Council
Craig Milton	NSW Minerals Council

Guests:

Justine Cox	NSW Department of Primary Industries
Matthew Riley	NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment (EES)

Apology:

Cameron Archer	The University of Newcastle
Bill Baxter	Yancoal
Nigel Charnock	Glencore
Mary-Anne Crawford	Singleton Council
Carolyn Herlihy	Hunter New England LHD
Peter Jaeger	Peabody Energy
Chris Knight	The Bloomfield Group
Daniel Lewer	Hunter Land Management
Karen Marler	NSW Environment Protection Authority
Donna McLaughlin	Malabar Coal
Monique Meyer	Resources Regulator
Jim Morgan	Wybong Action Group / NSW Farmers' Association
Neil Nelson	Singleton Beef and Land Management Association
Matt Parkinson	AGL - Bayswater Power Station
Laurie Perry	Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation
Jo Powells	Local Land Services
Chris Quinn	The Bloomfield Group
Andrew Reid	MACH Energy Mount Pleasant Operation

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed members and noted apologies received.

Mr. Amidy served as a temporary Chair for this meeting, following Ms. Thomas' resignation from the position in late-2019. Mr. Barben thanked Ms. Thomas for her commitment to the Working Group and Dialogue more generally and thanked her remaining as a member of the Working Groups.

2. Minutes from Previous Meeting

The minutes from the previous meeting were accepted and a summary of the actions was supported.

3. Presentation: ACARP Rehabilitation Project - Justine Cox (NSW DPI)

Ms. Cox provided members with an overview of the key results and outcomes of an ACARP study supported by the Dialogue's members that is examining the past and present mine rehabilitation to grazing land. Members were overall quite pleased with the results which showed that the soils used in site rehabilitation had produced results that compared more favourably than analogue sites. However, members noted the ongoing drought conditions which had severely impacted site rehabilitation, as well as additional issues with a lack of available and inconsistent historical rehabilitation data and site access. It was positive to see different species being used on different pasture sites.

Ms. Cox opened up discussion to the Working Group about what they see as potential future focus areas related to this research, as the next round of ACARP funding would commence soon. Member discussions have focused on how we can better get mines closer to closure, and the potential for post-mining land holders to over-work rehabilitated pasture land and having this impact industry's rehabilitation efforts. Ms. Cox advised that DPI has a lot of information about grazing management which may be of use.

Members encouraged Ms. Cox to start a dialogue with the Resources Regulator to establish if there is anything they are seeking to better understand. This project has shown that operators can have productive pasture from their soil profile, despite it being former mine land. The wider community may find this difficult to believe, so this research is important to highlight this can be done. Members also noted that sharing such information with the Resources Regulator may also help improve their understanding of difficulties with industry's ability to meet strict closure standards and 'self-sustaining' systems.

Ms. Cox advised that the draft report was prepared in December 2019, with three months to review by industry monitors. The report will be distributed amongst Working Group members once possible.

ACTION:

- **Dialogue secretariat to distribute the final report to Joint Working Group members.**

4. Review of 2019 Forum Outcomes

Mr. Barben provided an overview of the 2019 Forum, noting the discussion sessions had once again provided the Dialogue with useful feedback for consideration at this round of Joint Working Group meetings.

Air Quality

- Mr. Hodkinson discussed the mismatch between community expectations and the acceptable levels of emissions permitted by industry, and that a lot of this discussion is being driven by doctors in the area, who are referencing 2008 levels of air quality, in comparison to the Dialogue project that extends back to 2013. Mr. Hodkinson encouraged industry to return to the 2008 levels of air quality.
- Mr. Bennett advised that there is a difference between observations and monitored information we have to deal with each day, and that there is great uncertainty in how to deal with the disconnect between perceptions and observations.
- The Chair noted that air quality concerns often come back to communication. The Dialogue can work with EES to get advice on atmospheric pollutants to distribute to stakeholders
- Mr. Riley advised of past work examining the vertical structure of pollution, via one jointly funded monitor that extracts all information about layers using LIDAR. EES will be doing Upper Hunter

measurements at Merriwa with a ceilometer looking at the inflows into the valley. This will require the sharing of data but would be very helpful in understanding the dynamics of the valley.

- Members discussed a potential action could be to show the community how each site is monitoring the issue, with contouring of maps and LIDAR analysis to help guide people through what they are seeing. The Dialogue secretariat agreed that there is a potential project to unpack the work that is already being developed and would look to discuss further how we may pull together a concept around this.
- Members discussed the challenges that the science community is facing in seeking acknowledgement of studies and the dismissive nature of those whose opinions do not align with the science. Mr. Bennett added that the OEH publication that was recently published was based on the Particle Characterisation Study, and that it was designed to be easy to understand for general readers, yet still received criticism from activists.

Rehabilitation and Land Management

- Members agreed with the recommendation to promote the results of the latest rehabilitation study as it continues to generate significant interest in the Dialogue.
- Members recommended focusing on temporary measures to minimise dust creation before rehabilitation can fully occur.
- Communications about rehabilitation were discussed as a priority, and the Dialogue secretariat agreed that the Dialogue would need to look at other methods of communication to reinforce the message that rehabilitation is actually occurring.
- Members agreed that the involvement of the indigenous cultural burning program presentations in the 2019 Working Group meetings was very informative and the right path for the Dialogue to take in looking at other forms of land management. Members recommended keeping engaged with the groups involved for regular updates on their priorities and activities.

Water Quality and Stewardship

- Members agreed the Dialogue secretariat should seek to engage with industry and develop some case studies profiling local site water reuse and stewardship initiatives. Given the ongoing conditions, it would be good to have resources handy should any further cuts happen to water licences in the short-term.
- Members discussed the recommendation to look at water tank studies and whether it is worth revisiting this matter. Members discussed the tank cleaning offered by sites as well as filters and chlorine treatments, noting that it is not a major concern.

5. Presentation - Air Quality - Matthew Riley (NSW DPIE - Environment, Energy and Science)

Mr. Riley provided members with an overview of the recent change to hourly reporting of air quality information. The details of this change and other discussion about recent air quality is contained below:

- The change to hourly reporting was undertaken in response to community requests to shift to more timely reporting on air quality, as evidenced from high levels of unique web traffic to the DPIE(EES) Air Quality website during the peak of the 2019-20 bushfire season, and the need to undertake emergency monitoring during this time.
- While the changes are 'interim' changes, they will be staying due to ongoing community pressure, and will seek to address the lag between poor air quality and reporting of it, by which time the air may be clear.
- NSW is working alongside other governments to ensure greater nationwide consistency, with the intent of these changes being for people to better plan and protect their health. Recent government agencies have met to determine how to best implement enHealth's suggested proposal prior to the next fire season commencing in May/June 2020. COAG Health Council recently sent out a communique advising that all health ministers agree to focus on this.
- 24-hour average is still available to view on the DPIE(EES) website. While the EES can measure and report the basic data, they recognise that external providers can use this data in a more accessible or intuitive way via commercial apps for stakeholders (like transport apps).
- If industry is having issues accessing the data, this should be discussed with EES.
- The recent 'Blown Away' webinar hosted by EES was discussed, with members noting that the forecasting segment was interesting.
- Mr. Hodgkinson questioned what information was given to mines over the recent bushfire period.

Mr. Bennett (EPA) advised that each mine has their own rules as to how to operate and at what levels are appropriate. The EPA's review 5 years ago on how mines respond to adverse weather showed there were inconsistencies in mine behaviour and an inability to forecast well in the Upper Hunter. The EPA is working to develop their forecasting to the point where they can advise of adverse weather and mines can allow for modifying operations. Mr. Riley reiterated that forecasting is difficult, with other external factors (dust) impacting the success of modelling.

- Members agreed that the Upper Hunter community has an observation issue and there is not a full understanding of what is being seen in the sky. From the 2019 Forum discussions, it is clear that more education needs to be provided. Mr. Riley advised that EES struggled with this at a recent workshop and we are talking about an issue where the risk to individual health is low. Mr. Riley added that it is difficult to communicate to the general population about health, but not cause undue stress, and they are focusing on balanced approaches that make people alert, but not alarmed. Mr. Riley advised that any changes that do come through from EES will have a coordinated communications strategy with appropriate health messages and consistent supporting information.
- Mr. Riley advised that a paper will be released shortly from epidemiologists in the Medical Journal of Australia that will point to the bushfire air quality leading to a number of deaths.
- EES no longer communicates air quality is 'good by international standards' and instead now states that NSW is working to meet challenges of air quality management.

ACTION:

- **Dialogue secretariat to distribute Mr. Riley's presentation and other EES materials relevant to members.**

6. Update on Emissions and Health Projects

Members noted the update on the Dialogue's Emissions and Health-related projects, with the Dialogue secretariat to review the air quality report in the coming weeks and distribute amongst the wider Dialogue working group for comments.

7. Update on Land Management Projects

Members noted the update on the Dialogue's Land management-related projects, with the Dialogue secretariat to reach out to industry for 2019 rehabilitation progress data in the coming weeks.

8. Update on Water Projects

Members noted the update on the Dialogue's Water-related projects, with the Dialogue secretariat to reach out to industry for 2019 water use data in the coming weeks.

9. Update on Communications Activities

Mr. Mackie provided an update on the Dialogue's various communications and engagement activities, including the planning for the 2020 program of school mine tours.

10. Update on Dialogue Working Groups and Committees

Members noted the updates provided.

11. Project Proposal - Neville Hodkinson - Air Quality

Mr. Hodkinson provided a short presentation to members regarding a project proposal submitted to the Dialogue for Working Group consideration. The proposal focuses on improving air quality by minimising dispersion caused by mining operations, and to consider shifting to real-time air quality updates for the region. Mr. Hodkinson advised that he is on two CCCs and had raised these issues previously.

Members discussed the proposal, noting that mines have clear rules for what they need to do to achieve satisfactory air quality on a 12 hour and 24-hour rolling basis.

Ms. Richards provided Mr. Hodkinson with advice regarding BHP's relatively new Dust Control System, which has factored in community feedback and is reviewed periodically. The system includes TEOMs with 10 minute and 15-minute averages, which are able to calculate downstream and upstream in real time.

Alerts are sent to the control room, which sounds production alarms to fleet vehicles which will need to respond and record any actions undertaken to address the identified issue. This system is quite consistent with the proposal from Mr. Hodkinson, and probably largely exists across the other Upper Hunter mine sites, although there may be site variations.

Ms. Thomas advised the need to be realistic about alerts and alarms as well, noting that they are only useful when people react to them, and if there are too many going off constantly, this will likely drive down the urgency to respond. We need to find a balance between alarms that require an urgent response, and alerts that can help monitor situations.

Mr. Stephenson added that HVO has a similar system to BHP's and the issue may be that these systems are happening in isolation on monitors that are not part of the UHAQMN, and the community is therefore unaware of the full extent of planning and controls that sites have in place to monitor and respond to emerging air quality impacts in real-time. Most sites would be watching the UHAQMN monitors as well as others onsite to make decisions about how to respond. Perhaps there may be some way for the UHAQMN to contour this information to provide a more collaborative suite of information.

Mr. Bennett advised that the EPA provides guidance to sites to minimise dust, however they do not stipulate the discharge limits. The EPA is working with EES to determine the conditions that lead to dust to help predict these days.

The Chair recommended that Mr. Hodkinson may benefit from a tour of a site control room (suggestion for Bulga or Glendell) to better understand these systems and what is involved.

ACTION:

- **Dialogue secretariat to distribute Mr. Hodkinson's full proposal and supporting information for reference.**
- **Dialogue secretariat to engage with industry members and Mr. Hodkinson to arrange site control room tour.**

12. Other Business

No other business was raised.

13. Next Meeting / Close

The meeting closed at 11:55 AM.

**Actions arising from meeting
UHMD Land Management and Water Joint Working Group Meeting**

Action	Responsibility	Status
Dialogue secretariat to distribute the final report to Joint Working Group members. Report awaiting finalisation. To be distributed to members once finalised.	Dialogue secretariat	In progress
Dialogue secretariat to distribute Mr. Riley's presentation and other EES materials relevant to members.	Dialogue secretariat	Completed
Dialogue secretariat to distribute Mr. Hodkinson's full proposal and supporting information for reference.	Dialogue secretariat	Completed
Dialogue secretariat to engage with industry members and Mr. Hodkinson to arrange a site control room tour. Action currently deferred due to Government COVID-19 advice regarding restrictions. HVO personnel to raise request directly with Mr. Hodkinson at upcoming CCC meeting	Dialogue secretariat	In progress

**Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue
Joint Environment Working Group - 10 June 2020**

Agenda Item 3

COVID-19 UPDATE AND IMPACTS ON 2020 PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Issue

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in unprecedented impacts to the daily life and work arrangements of us all in 2020, including impacting how the Dialogue operates and conducts several of our projects and activities.

Background

Fortunately, the Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue's Working Groups were able to meet during February and March to discuss the feedback received at the 2019 Forum and determine where the Dialogue's priorities should be focused in 2020.

The Dialogue secretariat remains committed to engaging with our stakeholders to provide updates on our progress during this time of uncertainty. The Dialogue distributed a brief document (**attached**) summarising the 2019 Forum feedback alongside the March 2020 Joint Working Group discussions, with information collated across three key themes.

Also included in the document is the table below outlining projects and activities that have been impacted by COVID-19 (e.g. school tours, events) as well as those which the Dialogue secretariat has been able to progress in the recent period (e.g. annual reporting projects, website upgrade, and a focus on communications).

Unaffected by COVID-19	Impacted by COVID-19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annual reporting projects - Data currently being sought from industry members for the Water Accounting Framework and Rehabilitation Principles and Commitments projects. These are both on track. ● Upper Hunter Air Quality Monitoring Network Data Analysis Project - Report is currently being finalised and will be sent for peer review by CSIRO shortly. ● Newsletters and Communications - Recent newsletter expedited to update members on recent Dialogue progress. ● Member update emails - Communicating updates to members on relevant developments as they arise. ● Procurement Information Hub - Liaising with companies to finalise outstanding information for this resource. ● Website upgrades - Ensuring up to date information and progressing with planning for upgrading the website by Q3 2020. ● HRSTS Study - Awaiting further water quality analysis to close our report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School Mine Tours Program - Scheduled tours postponed, to be rescheduled once public health advice is updated. ● Community events schedule - Community events unlikely to go ahead in short-medium term. Dialogue to keep engaged with shows for alternate/future plans. ● Working Group and Steering Committee meetings - Face to face meetings postponed until public health advice is updated. Dialogue meetings will be undertaken as teleconference or zoom meetings in the interim. ● Business Procurement Events - 2020 events plan drafted following advice from Joint Working Group, TBC with Chambers once public health advice is updated, and large gatherings permitted once again. ● Dialogue 2020 Forum - Ongoing restrictions regarding large gatherings may require the Dialogue to reconsider this event.

Members were encouraged to review the document and advise whether this summary reflected these discussions and potential actions for the Dialogue to consider exploring in 2020.

FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

Attachment: Summary of Working Group Discussions

Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue
Summary of the Working Group Discussions of 2019 Forum Feedback and 2020 Priorities
May 2020

Introduction

As previously communicated to Steering Committee members, the ongoing COVID-19 situation has presented a number of challenges for 2020 with regards to the Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue.

While there has been a noticeable impact on the ability for our stakeholders to gather at Dialogue meetings and for the Dialogue to attend local events, the Dialogue secretariat has been busily working to progress a number of projects in this time and keep members updated on the progress of such projects and activities through various communications channels.

The Dialogue was fortunate to hold an initial round of Working Group meetings to discuss the feedback from the 2019 Forum and help determine which suggestions may be appropriate for further consideration and endorsement by the Joint Advisory Steering Committee. This summary commences on **Page 2**.

Below is a short table that provides an overview of key Dialogue projects and activities impacted by COVID-19, and those for which the Dialogue secretariat has been able to continue or commence during the recent period.

Table of Projects/Activities and the impact of COVID-19 on the Dialogue

Unaffected by COVID-19	Impacted by COVID-19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annual reporting projects - Data currently being sought from industry members for the Water Accounting Framework and Rehabilitation Principles and Commitments projects. These are both on track. ● Upper Hunter Air Quality Monitoring Network Data Analysis Project - Report is currently being finalised and will be sent for peer review by CSIRO shortly. ● Newsletters and Communications - Recent newsletter expedited to update members on recent Dialogue progress. ● Member update emails - Communicating updates to members on relevant developments as they arise. ● Procurement Information Hub - Liaising with companies to finalise outstanding information for this resource. ● Website upgrades - Ensuring up to date information and progressing with planning for upgrading the website by Q3 2020. ● HRSTS Study - Awaiting further water quality analysis to close our report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School Mine Tours Program - Scheduled tours postponed, to be rescheduled once public health advice is updated. ● Community events schedule - Community events unlikely to go ahead in short-medium term. Dialogue to keep engaged with shows for alternate/future plans. ● Working Group and Steering Committee meetings - Face to face meetings postponed until public health advice is updated. Dialogue meetings will be undertaken as teleconference or zoom meetings in the interim. ● Business Procurement Events - 2020 events plan drafted following advice from Joint Working Group, TBC with Chambers once public health advice is updated, and large gatherings permitted once again. ● Dialogue 2020 Forum - Ongoing restrictions regarding large gatherings may require the Dialogue to reconsider this event.

Introduction to Forum Feedback

Members from the Joint Environment Working Group, Joint Economic and Social Development Working Group, and Communications Working Group met during March 2020 to discuss the feedback received from stakeholders at the 2019 Forum.

Below is a summary of these recent Working Group discussions, which Steering Committee members may consider in addition to the Forum summaries. As evident from the summary, much of the discussion session feedback related to refining and improving the communication of the outcomes of existing projects and activities (including the annual reporting projects) the Dialogue and other key stakeholders are currently engaged in, rather than creating new Dialogue projects.

1. ENVIRONMENT

a. Air Quality, Emissions & Health

<i>Air Quality Analysis Project</i>	
2019 Forum Feedback	Working Group Discussion
<p>Promote findings of the Air Quality project. Significant interest in Air Quality project presentation overall and were keen to see what the full outcomes of this analysis would provide, given the ongoing recent poor air quality the region is experiencing.</p> <p>Opportunity to provide a lot of data and roll out different aspects of the report over the year.</p>	<p>Members supported the Dialogue promoting the key findings of the report, noting Damon Roddis' recent presentation was well-received by the majority of attendees. The Dialogue secretariat has reviewed a draft copy of ERM's report, which has been distributed for wider comments, prior to sending to CSIRO for peer review.</p>

<i>Perceptions of Air Quality</i>	
2019 Forum Feedback	Working Group Discussion
<p>Provide information on industry air quality management practices to clarify community expectations.</p> <p>Address mismatch between results presented and air quality being experienced. Amenity or health issue.</p> <p>Improving awareness to fill the gap between community expectations of air quality management and what is legally permitted.</p> <p>Individual mines vs. cumulative</p>	<p>Members agreed that tackling community perceptions of air quality issues should be a key focus for the Dialogue as there is significant uncertainty from residents about what is actually being seen in the sky when it is a hazy or dusty day, and what the potential health impacts may be on the population centres.</p> <p>Members suggested the Dialogue could examine what this visible haze or dust consists of, which may help to determine whether any links with industry exist, or enable the Dialogue to qualify the air quality relative to their human health impact.</p>

<p>impact across the region. Much of the community remains unaware of what practices the industry has in place.</p> <p>Reshare Clearing The Air video to demonstrate industry actions. Reaction to short term spikes in dust measurements from both regulators and miners. What is industry doing in response to short term spikes?</p>	<p>Members discussed the challenges faced in presenting scientific studies and analysis to the community, noting these are increasingly dismissed by those whose opinions don't align with science. While industry continues to advise stakeholders on the range of mitigation and management practices deployed onsite, this is having limited effectiveness in reaching the appropriate community members who may not believe these messages.</p> <p>Mitchell Bennett (NSW EPA) and Matthew Riley (NSW DPIE - Energy, Environment & Science) attended the Joint Working Group meeting, and advised the NSW Government also faces challenges in addressing community perceptions about air quality and the disconnect between observations and monitored information.</p> <p>Members agreed that increasing communication on air quality concerns should be the Dialogue's short-term priority. The Dialogue could liaise with DPIE-EES to provide timely, straightforward and trusted information and advice on the impact of atmospheric pollutants to stakeholders. Whether the community accepts this or not is outside of the Dialogue's control, however we can focus on using plain language and reducing the level of technical information provided to improve understanding.</p> <p>DPIE-EES advised of previous work undertaken to examine the vertical structure of air pollution plumes via a jointly-funded monitor that extracts information about layers using LIDAR technology. DPIE-EES will soon be undertaking measurements at Merriwa with a ceilometer and looking at the inflows into the Hunter Valley. DPIE-EES can share this data which would be helpful in understanding the valley's dynamics.</p> <p>Members agreed the Dialogue secretariat could assist in showing the community how each mine site is monitoring air quality, by contouring DPIE-EES and industry air quality maps, and using LIDAR analysis to guide people through what they are seeing. The Dialogue secretariat agreed that there is a potential project to explore in unpacking the work that is already being developed in this space, and would look to engage with NSW EPA and DPIE-EES on how this might be pulled together.</p>
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<i>Air Quality and Health Impacts</i>	
2019 Forum Feedback	Working Group Discussion
Engaging with the health sector regarding air quality impacts and insights. Engage with health professionals to better understand the exposure risk to human health from elevated PM10 and PM2.5 particles in the region.	Members discussed the 2019 Forum suggestions to engage with relevant groups regarding their air quality concerns in relation to health impacts, noting that a presentation and discussion with David Meredith at Coal Services may be helpful for a future Joint Environment Working Group meeting.

b. Rehabilitation and Land Management

<i>ACARP study of past and present mine rehabilitation</i>	
2019 Forum Feedback	Working Group Discussion
Grazing Trials/Studies on Rehabilitated Mine Land. Dialogue to discuss and promote the results of the ACARP study in early 2020 once completed.	<p>The Joint Working Group received an update on the ACARP study at the Joint Environment Working Group from Justine Cox, NSW DPI, who has taken over reporting duties from Neil Griffiths. Overall, members were pleased with the study's results which showed that the soils used in site rehabilitation had produced results that compared more favourably than analogue pasture sites. Members noted that while ongoing drought conditions had adversely impacted site rehabilitation, it was positive to see a variety of different species being used on different pasture sites.</p> <p>The draft report is currently under review by industry monitors who will provide feedback to ACARP directly. It will be distributed amongst Working Group members once this feedback has been considered.</p> <p>Members recommended the Dialogue seek to promote the study's findings as it continues to generate significant interest in the Dialogue, identifying the Communications Working Group could assist in developing a comms strategy.</p>

<i>Rehabilitation GIS Portal</i>	
2019 Forum Feedback	Working Group Discussion
NSW Government GIS Rehabilitation Portal. Positive interest from stakeholders awaiting the release. Minor concerns about it being a	Members supported continued engagement between the Dialogue secretariat and DRG/Resources Regulator to share updates about this project's status and release.

<p>closed resource with limited input from industry, and limited opportunity for community feedback.</p>	<p>Members were hopeful that once released, this resource would assist in improving awareness of the whole rehabilitation process (e.g. different stages and complexities throughout the mining life cycle).</p>
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Improving Awareness of Rehabilitation Methods

2019 Forum Feedback	Working Group Discussion
<p>Improve communication to demonstrate rehabilitation methods. Lack of understanding of what 'rehabilitation' means (e.g. mature vs. seeding). How to communicate progress via the annual rehabilitation results infographic. More photos? Highlight what is involved, who is responsible, the different landform types, design types and erosion models involved?</p>	<p>Members discussed recent interactions with the community that have highlighted that many don't believe rehabilitation is being undertaken, possibly due to negative press and the inability to access/view rehabilitation and recognise what constitutes rehabilitation.</p> <p>Members agreed that the Dialogue secretariat should be focusing on communicating that progressive rehabilitation is being undertaken. The Dialogue secretariat agreed that we would need to review our suite of comms materials and explore other methods to reinforce key rehabilitation messages and showcase quality rehabilitation projects and activities across the Upper Hunter.</p> <p>Members supported the promotion of the DRG rehabilitation summary video, which is believed to be released shortly as this may assist in improving awareness from a trusted source within the community.</p>

Innovative cultural burning programs

2019 Forum Feedback	Working Group Discussion
<p>Greater involvement of indigenous groups in rehabilitation and land management groups. Recent presentations on cultural burning and land management were well-received. Encouragement to continue engagement with these and similar groups.</p>	<p>Members supported the continued involvement of organisations involved in cultural burning programs in the Upper Hunter. The presentations in the 2019 Working Group meetings were well-received, with members encouraging the Dialogue to seek regular updates on their progress and activities.</p>

c. Water Quality and Stewardship

Water stewardship case studies to highlight water use and drought preparedness	
2019 Forum Feedback	Working Group Discussion
<p>Developing case studies on tailings storage and water treatment to show reclaimed water is used, site forecasts for water use in drought conditions, water efficiency projects, innovation and Ravensworth Greater Water Sharing Scheme.</p> <p>Provide information on industry drought preparation. Highlighting industry's drought planning and projections for limited water use, and the associated impact on operations.</p>	<p>Industry members noted they are keenly conserving and reducing water use onsite. Although recent rainfall has helped, further rain is required in the coming months, as the region prepares to face reductions in water allocations.</p> <p>Members agreed the Dialogue secretariat should seek to develop industry case studies that profile water reuse and stewardship initiatives across local sites. This will help demonstrate the level of planning sites are taking to prepare for ongoing drought conditions and the benefits this may provide the community long-term.</p> <p>Members agreed that the Greater Ravensworth Water Sharing Scheme is a good example of industry that highlights the conservation and reuse of resources onsite, which could resonate with stakeholders in the context of current environmental challenges in the region.</p>

Revisiting the Water Tank Study	
2019 Forum Feedback	Working Group Discussion
<p>Is it worth reviewing the Camberwell tank study for drinking water/tank water impacts from pollutants?</p>	<p>Members advised of a range of current tank cleaning services and treatments offered to residents by local sites and that it is generally not a major concern.</p> <p>Members advised the original study found there was nothing to suggest the mining industry was directly responsible for various water tank impacts (e.g. elevated lead levels were attributed to lead flashing). The study determined that in many cases residents were not complying with tank water management guidelines (i.e. cleaned every two years, drawing on Glennies Creek water).</p> <p>Members advised that the Dialogue may need to look at communicating the outcomes of these studies. The Dialogue secretariat has received information from HNEH regarding the initial study findings.</p>

2. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Upper Hunter Economic Diversification Project	
2019 Forum Feedback	Working Group Discussion
<p>Improve stakeholder understanding of the Upper Hunter Economic Diversification Project</p> <p>Share information from NSW Govt about who is leading this project, what its purpose is, how it is relevant to the community, and whether it is successful? This will help improve community understanding of efforts to diversify the Upper Hunter economy.</p>	<p>Members noted there is a general lack of awareness about this project across all stakeholder groups and that it appears to involve only government organisations with little representation or consideration of external stakeholders.</p> <p>Members supported the Dialogue secretariat engaging with the NSW government for an update on this project to determine how the Dialogue secretariat may assist with economic diversification objectives in the Upper Hunter. Members recommended a presentation from Stephen Wills (Regional NSW - RIAR) at a future JWG meeting.</p>

Skills and Jobs	
2019 Forum Feedback	Working Group Discussion
<p>Address the skills shortages and demand for trades trainees, apprentices, and graduates in the Upper Hunter</p> <p>Work with industry partners to determine whether any mining companies or their suppliers require any specific apprentice trades. Promote job advertisements on Dialogue website via a 'Jobs Hub'.</p>	<p>Members advised that this would be a potentially resource intensive project, and given that industry has different methods of advertising jobs this may not be a feasible project.</p> <p>Members were uncertain about which parties were experiencing skills shortages and demand for trainees or apprentices as reported at the 2019 Forum (whether by local business or mining companies). Industry advised there is no shortage of apprentices or trainees, however skilled workers such as engineers are in demand. Business Chambers advised that some businesses have had difficulties attracting certain trades, however noted this was not a primary concern.</p> <p>A presentation at a recent MCCI breakfast event showed that Year 10 school leavers are moving outside the Upper Hunter for apprenticeship and career opportunities, and that mining is not perceived as a life-long career. May be worth tapping into this research to understand concerns around the pipeline of available workers.</p> <p>Members were unsure the Dialogue could assist in this space, and noted that skills issues may be addressed via NSWMC careers programs. Members supported parking this issue and revisit if required.</p>

Procurement Information Hub	
2019 Forum Feedback	Working Group Discussion
<p>Refining the Procurement Information Hub. Complete outstanding information and increase engagement in the long-term. Link to other existing hubs. Develop a proforma template to give time-poor smaller suppliers a chance to tender without lengthy individualised letters.</p>	<p>Members were pleased with the website's procurement information hub, noting that it is pleasing to see stakeholders accessing company sites for information. The Dialogue secretariat is finalising the content from companies with information outstanding, and will seek to produce a pamphlet resource for distribution at future events in the longer-term.</p> <p>Members agreed that it would be beneficial to try and map out a case study of a supplier navigating the procurement hub or business events to successfully secure a tender opportunity with a mining company. The Dialogue secretariat is following up with Mount Pleasant Operation regarding a potential case study.</p> <p>Members noted the Communications Working Group could focus on the promotion of this resource and to whom.</p>

Procurement Business Events	
2019 Forum Feedback	Working Group Discussion
<p>Refining the Business Events</p> <p>Expand the format of these events in 2019 by considering different themes, speakers, and locations, e.g. longer detailed workshop-style events, supplier speakers, other companies not already featured.</p>	<p>Members noted the 2019 events had generated positive feedback and useful suggestions for improving the 2020 events. Singleton Business Chamber has a procurement event set for September 2020, and the Dialogue will seek to confirm a similar MCCI event shortly.</p> <p>Members supported framing the 2020 events in a 'Meet the Buyers' format, noting that short timed 'five-minute elevator pitch' discussions between suppliers and companies would benefit suppliers and ensure they are getting value from their attendance.</p> <p>Members supported the Dialogue producing a 'cheat sheet' for attendees in advance to brief them on the range of relevant considerations they may need to cover off on when discussing opportunities with mining companies. This resource could include a matrix of each company involved and the services they offer (both continuous and one-off), as is currently displayed on the procurement hub, and would ensure that suppliers are having the right conversations with the right companies.</p>

	<p>Members encouraged the Dialogue to provide a mechanism that allows attendees to engage with companies offline (e.g. exchanging business gift cards, or register for a post-event discussion). Circulating a list of attendees will also assist engagement.</p> <p>Members agreed that in addition to dedicated procurement personnel, companies should also allow access to the technical personnel who have the procurement need (e.g. engineering, maintenance, enviros, production) at these events.</p>
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Standardisation of induction requirements

2019 Forum Feedback	Working Group Discussion
<p>Determine if any opportunities to standardise mining procurement/induction requirements could improve supplier engagement with industry in the Upper Hunter</p> <p>Individualistic approaches to site access and how work is undertaken. Any opportunity to work with industry and determine commonalities and develop a mining standardisation aid or tool, similar to a construction white card, that identifies a supplier has met a standard level of skills, training or requirements required across all sites. Is this possible? If not, why not?</p> <p>Lack of consistency and awareness about the induction process across sites. Easy to gather this info for each company and add to existing Procurement Information, establish a generic induction process to guide.</p>	<p>Members noted the suggestion to standardise site requirements, however agreed that each company has valid reasons for their particular set of site requirements, and that as these vary greatly between organisations, and between different types of contracts within the one site, standardisation is unlikely to be achieved. Business chambers advised this is not a prominent issue for their members.</p> <p>Members discussed whether it would be worth developing a 'mobilisation fact sheet' to provide an overview of basic requirements, however members agreed this would need to be very high-level and generic so that it would have a limited benefit to suppliers. Members advised that once suppliers take the steps to actually engage with a company on a procurement tender, this will build familiarity with the requirements and equip the supplier for future interactions.</p>

Social issues

2019 Forum Feedback	Working Group Discussion
<p>Greater focus on contemporary social issues</p>	<p>Members noted that this included few suggestions on what particular social issues the Dialogue should base this work around (e.g. youth, mental health or indigenous issues). Members recommended the Dialogue secretariat engage</p>

<p>Dialogue has had a strong initial focus on economic projects. Any opportunity to look at social impacts like housing cost and availability or engaging with the HRF Centre through economic/social surveys.</p>	<p>with the Singleton Interagency's David Baker (or Singleton Council's Kim Manwaring) to get a better sense of the current or emerging social issues and to better understand their priorities to avoid replicating their work and ensure the Dialogue is adding value.</p> <p>Members discussed increasing support for the Hunter Research Foundation (HRF) Centre's economic breakfasts in the Upper Hunter, as they are providing regular relevant research focused on both economic and social issues in the region, and would also give the Dialogue reach to relevant groups in the community outside the Dialogue organisational structure.</p>
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3. COMMUNICATIONS

School Mine Tours Program	
2019 Forum Feedback	Working Group Discussion
<p>Evaluate the School Mine Tours Program, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Survey teachers ● Building on the initial relationship from the tour by engaging with students in the classroom before/after the tour. ● Expand the tours beyond the Upper Hunter into the Lower Hunter, Sydney and Newcastle schools. ● Leverage off parents, siblings and other key family members to expand community engagement with the tours to help the broader community. ● Reinforce key messages regarding what the tours are actually about (neutrality and learning) to dispel false information. 	<p>Members supported the Dialogue seeking to increase pre- and post-tour engagement with students, and noted that the NSWMC's PRIME program would support this engagement.</p> <p>Members were pleased to hear that Scone schools had agreed to participate in an expanded 2020 program of tours. Members noted that suggestions to include other catchments in the tours program would significantly increase the current tour load being asked of companies involved, however the NSWMC PRIME program would likely assist these catchments and increase engagement with mining education in classroom learning.</p> <p>Members supported seeking additional teacher feedback on the tours, and were pleased that anecdotal feedback from teachers had been positive to date.</p> <p>Members welcomed greater access to viewing rehabilitation progress on sites, and in some cases tree planting activities for students, to complement the general tours and classroom learnings to encourage practical 'hands on' experiences.</p>

Utilising existing networks to share Dialogue and partner content

2019 Forum Feedback	Working Group Discussion
<p>Utilise existing networks and community avenues to better distribute Dialogue material. Promoting the Dialogue newsletter in libraries or markets, government departments, or linking in better with local publications like @theCoalface to share newsletter information.</p> <p>Leveraging Dialogue partner networks to share content. Greater utilisation of industry and other partners in spreading Dialogue messages and vice versa.</p>	<p>The Dialogue secretariat encouraged member companies to share Dialogue content such as videos and news articles, as well as individual site tour stories.</p> <p>Companies were also encouraged to share any news of relevance to their local operations that the Dialogue can share across our social media platforms.</p>

Website and social media content

2019 Forum Feedback	Working Group Discussion
<p>Share stats on the Dialogue website, social media and newsletter readership. Visitation rates of the Dialogue website, Facebook page and newsletters to determine how effective we are at communicating our stories. Updates for Comms Working Group</p> <p>Better use of the website and social media. Website connection and navigation issues, poor interface, buried information. Upgrade expected late 2020. Clear opportunity for lead project with Comms WG. Scheduling posts on Facebook. Potential for Twitter?</p>	<p>Members welcomed greater visibility of Dialogue website visitation statistics and were pleased to see that Dialogue content was being viewed by stakeholders. Members recommended the website be regularly updated to remain relevant to stakeholders and encouraged sharing stats to the Working Group on a regular basis.</p> <p>Members provided positive feedback on the 2019 Forum summary video, and were pleased that it had generated good engagement. Member companies were encouraged to share the video to encourage greater interaction with the Dialogue.</p> <p>Members discussed the Dialogue's current website and supported an upgrade in 2020 to improve the reliability and accessibility of content. This item will be a recurring discussion at future 2020 meetings.</p> <p>Members supported the Dialogue investigating how we can best utilise the Dialogue's VR content to facilitate greater engagement with, and sharing of this content outside of the Dialogue events and school tours.</p> <p>The Dialogue secretariat encouraged companies to document school tours on their sites where possible, as this would help share positive Dialogue news stories and social media content.</p>

Accessibility concerns of Forum and Dialogue

2019 Forum Feedback	Working Group Discussion
<p>Making the Forum and Dialogue more accessible. Perception of an exclusive event for industry only. Need to engage more proactively with prospective participants throughout the year to ensure awareness of inclusivity and ability to provide input. Address lack of community members.</p> <p>Generally limited understanding of Dialogue structure, meeting cycles and working group involvement. Need to strip back the website and make it clear how people can be involved, encourage engagement, and how we go about our business. Potentially reverse the process and get the community to present to mines or at least sharing what we're all doing around the table.</p>	<p>Members noted the concerns about the community accessing the Forum and the Dialogue more generally and the perception that these are closed events and initiatives. Members agreed the Dialogue should focus on communicating with stakeholders how they can engage with the Dialogue and attend future events. The Dialogue will seek to be more proactive in identifying and approaching new attendees to ensure they receive the information and discussions they are seeking.</p> <p>The Dialogue's newly designed newsletter will include a column in each edition that provides an overview of the Dialogue's establishment and objectives to increase awareness and encourage prospective members to become engaged.</p>

Engaging in face to face events

2019 Forum Feedback	Working Group Discussion
<p>Continue face to face and proactive engagement with stakeholders. Dialogue event attendance is well received, as well as regular presentations to CCCs and councils. Keep flexible and look for available avenues (online and physical) that will achieve the desired results.</p>	<p>The Dialogue's event plan for 2020 was supported by members, although significant changes will be required as the COVID-19 situation progresses and events are delayed or cancelled in 2020.</p>

4. FUTURE FORUMS

- Some Working Groups discussed how the Dialogue secretariat might approach the planning for future Forums, both in terms of content and frequency.
- Members discussed whether a two-yearly event may be more suitable for the Dialogue to ensure that we can demonstrate significant progress and provide value to attendees, rather than having an event where many projects are in progress.
- The Hunter Coal Festival may be a potential option for the Dialogue to have a large presence and would act as an appropriate opportunity to meet with a large range of stakeholders to gather feedback. The Singleton Cultural Spectacular was also flagged as an additional opportunity.
- The Dialogue secretariat is conscious of the increasing level of demand that the Dialogue's annual projects, school tours and business events are placing on member companies, in addition to personnel attending the Working Group and Steering Committee meetings.

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Agenda Item 4

EMISSIONS AND HEALTH UPDATE

Please see below for a summary of current Dialogue projects and other activities being undertaken in the Emissions and Health area:

Analysis of Upper Hunter Air Quality Monitoring Network Data

The Dialogue has been conducting an analysis of Upper Hunter Air Quality Monitoring Network data to provide an assessment of long-term trends on PM10 and PM2.5 levels.

The Dialogue engaged ERM to undertake the study to answer two key questions:

1. Has the Air Quality in the Upper Hunter Valley changed since monitoring began? and
2. Is the Air Quality in the Upper Hunter Valley measured at the monitoring stations different from Air Quality measured at other locations in NSW?

A draft report was recently distributed to Working Group members for review, and the feedback received was provided to ERM to make changes prior to peer review. We thank all members for their comments and trust this feedback is reflected in the final report.

The report is being peer reviewed by Melita Keywood at the CSIRO, who led the Upper Hunter Particle Characterisation Study (2012), and the Lower Hunter Particle Characterisation Study. Comments from this review are expected shortly, which will then be considered prior to finalisation and release of the report.

Please find **attached** a copy of the revised draft incorporating member comments.

NSW Air Quality Statement 2019

NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment (Environment, Energy & Science) provided a NSW Annual Air Quality Statement for 2019 in late February, which was referred to at the previous Working Group meeting. Please see the summary and a link to the statement below:

Air quality in New South Wales (NSW) was greatly affected by the continuing intense drought conditions and unprecedented extensive bushfires during 2019. The poorer air quality than 2018 was primarily due to elevated particle pollution throughout the State.

The bushfire emergency saw around 4 million hectares burnt in NSW from July to December 2019, resulting in widespread smoke impacts on many regions through spring and early summer. In addition, continuing intense drought has led to an increase in widespread dust events throughout the year. A further source of particles came from hazard reduction burns in and around Sydney in the cooler months.

Levels of nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide and carbon monoxide easily met national standards, with the exception of an exceedance of the hourly nitrogen dioxide standard at the new Goulburn station during the bushfire emergency period.

Ozone levels increased compared with the previous year, due to effects of warm and dry weather and climatic conditions together with other factors such as emissions from extensive bushfires in the year, meeting the national standards on 91% of all days.

Link to statement: <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/air/air-quality-statement>

Upper Hunter Air Quality Monitoring Network - Spring 2019 Update

The Spring 2019 seasonal air quality update was recently published in late May 2020, see update below for reference.

Air quality in the Upper Hunter was greatly affected by the continuing intense drought conditions and unprecedented extensive bushfires during spring 2019, resulting in poorer air quality throughout the region. Muswellbrook and Singleton recorded very good to fair air quality indices within national benchmarks 71% and 74% of the time, respectively. Conditions in the region continued to be extremely dry and warm, resulting in elevated particle levels from bushfire smoke, long-range dust transport during widespread dust events, and local dust sources (including those from industrial activities).

- Levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and sulfur dioxide (SO₂) were good, remaining below national benchmark concentrations.
- Daily average levels of fine particulate matter PM_{2.5} (particles less than or equal to 2.5 microns in diameter) were above the 25 µg/m³ (micrograms per cubic metre of air) benchmark on 14 days (29–31 October and 1, 12, 16–18, 21–23, 26 and 28–29 November), all during the bushfire emergency period. Regional maximum daily PM_{2.5} levels on these days ranged from 26.1 to 80.0 µg/m³
 - Singleton had 10 days, while Camberwell and Muswellbrook had 12 days over the benchmark.
- Daily average levels of PM₁₀ (particles less than or equal to 10 microns in diameter) were above the 50 µg/m³ benchmark on 45 days (6–7, 12–13, 16 and 27–28 September, 3–4, 7–8, 16–19 and 24–31 October, 1–3, 7–8, 12, 14–23 and 25–30 November). Regional maximum daily PM₁₀ levels on these days ranged from 50.6 to 446.1 µg/m³.
 - There were 20 days over the PM₁₀ benchmark at Merriwa, Singleton South and Wybong, and up to 38 days at Camberwell (Table 1).
 - There were many widespread events during the season, with all sites over the PM₁₀ benchmark on 13 days (29% of PM₁₀ exceedance days).
- There were eight days from late October onwards (during the bushfire emergency period), when particle levels at one or more large population centres reached hazardous levels (26, 30–31 October and 12, 21–22, 26 and 29 November). These hazardous days were due to smoke, widespread dust events or a combination of both. These were all widespread regional particle events, with hazardous levels also recorded in other NSW regions on all eight days.

Full report:

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/-/media/OEH/Corporate-Site/Documents/Air/air-quality-monitoring-network-upper-hunter-spring-2019-200220.pdf>

Upper Hunter Dust Risk Forecasting Scheme

No update.

Recommendation:

- That Working Group members discuss recent air quality issues and provide feedback on the Dialogue's current air quality projects.

FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

Attachment: Upper Hunter Air Quality Monitoring Network - Data Analysis (Revised Report)

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1hnpjwtjM4Dquzb_iT7P2Rc9qqNN1WVG9

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Agenda Item 5

UPDATE ON LAND MANAGEMENT PROJECTS

Please see below for a summary of current Dialogue projects and other activities being undertaken in the Land Management area:

Rehabilitation Principles and Commitments - 2019 Results and Company Reports

The Dialogue is currently collecting 2019 rehabilitation and disturbance data from Upper Hunter industry members. Draft results are expected shortly and will be circulated amongst Working Group members for review prior to publishing on the Dialogue website.

As with previous data requests, the Dialogue is also seeking industry comments regarding their rehabilitation progress and future rehabilitation planning to provide important contextual information to the results received. Individual company reports will once again be published on the Dialogue website.

Grazing Trials / ACARP study into rehabilitation projects

As members will be aware, Justine Cox, Soil Scientist for the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries presented to the Joint Environment Working Group in March 2020 with a preliminary overview of ACARP project C27030 - Examination of Past and Present Mine Rehabilitation to Grazing Land as a Guide to Future Research. A draft report was being reviewed by the industry monitors who provided feedback directly to ACARP. As a result of this feedback, the report is still undergoing editing to finalise. Once completed, the report will be distributed to Working Group members.

Pilot Pathway for Post-Mining Land Use

Work continues to advance case studies to test the pilot pathways for post mining land uses. NSWMC and member companies continue to advocate for action on this matter with a variety of regulators including the Department of Resources and Geoscience and the Resources Regulator.

While it was understood that resourcing was to be allocated within DPIE to manage this matter, this is yet to occur, and the matter is currently being managed by Michael Wright and Stephen Wills.

Rehabilitation GIS Portal

The Rehabilitation GIS Portal is an online portal which allows for the collection of rehabilitation spatial data into a centralised geodatabase. This resource is yet to be publicly released.

Update on cultural burning programs

The Dialogue continues to liaise with Laurie Perry (Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation) to share information regarding cultural burning programs in the Upper Hunter region. Mr. Perry has advised that MACH Energy and Glencore have been working towards undertaking two burns in late June/July, with further interest from the Australian Defence Force at Singleton Army Camp. A link to a recent education video featuring Victor Steffensen and Jess Wegner from Firesticks Alliance and Toby Whaleboat from Local Land Services can be viewed here: <https://vimeo.com/395846363/350015e741>.

Synoptic Plan

No update.

Recommendation:

- **That Working Group members discuss the recent developments with land management projects.**

FOR INFORMATION / DISCUSSION

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UPDATE ON WATER PROJECTS

Please see below for a summary of current Dialogue projects and other activities being undertaken in the Water area:

Water Accounting Framework - 2019 Water Use Results and Contextual Summaries

The Dialogue is currently collecting 2019 water accounting data from Upper Hunter industry members. Draft results are expected shortly, and will be added to contextual data to quantify industry's water use in the 2019 calendar year in the context of the Hunter River and other water users (e.g. businesses,

As with the 2018 data request, the Dialogue is once again seeking industry comments via an annual statement summarising their water use in 2019, as well as information on water stewardship or efficiency projects that may increase awareness of reuse and recycling of water across Upper Hunter operations.

Hunter River Salinity Trading Scheme (HRSTS) Water Quality Study

Following the completion of the initial study into the water quality at Hunter River Salinity Trading Scheme discharge points compared to the overall health of the Hunter River, the Steering Committee met with the EPA and the University of Newcastle to discuss the need for a follow-on study. It was considered that, given the good performance of the scheme, that further studies may not be necessary. The steering committee thought it important to close out the issues identified in the initial study and are currently considering the need for further studies.

The Dialogue Secretariat sought advice from hydrological consulting firm HEC on a monitoring protocol to examine the actual discharge levels under regular discharge conditions. Given the sampling was taken during a prolonged dry period, the results are not representative of discharge conditions and would impact the results. The monitoring protocol has been provided to member companies and enacted when a discharge event occurs.

Data is being sourced from the recent discharge opportunities to examine the results under normal discharge conditions. The Dialogue secretariat will advise on any further developments as they arise.

Recommendation:

- **That Working Group members discuss the progress made with the Dialogue's current water projects.**

FOR INFORMATION / DISCUSSION

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Agenda Item 7

UPDATE ON COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITIES

Please see below for an update on the Dialogue's various communication and engagement activities:

Website Refresh

- The Dialogue is working with the Dialogue's Communications Working Group to progress and plan for a refresh to the Dialogue website. The current website is no longer fit for purpose and in recent times has been clunky, confusing to navigate, unable to update effectively, and is overly complicated and text heavy.
- Similar to the recent NSW Mining website refresh, it is hoped that refreshing the Dialogue website will make it more:
 - **Simple** - Clean, straightforward, and uncluttered appearance, concise information.
 - **Relevant** - Easier to edit and create new content to ensure it remains up to date.
 - **Dynamic** - Utilising picture/video content to show rather than tell what we do where possible.
 - **Reliable** - People know that they can head to the website and find what they want. If the website is unable to deliver their needs, they need to know they can easily engage with us offline to answer questions or retrieve information.
- The Dialogue will be working to review and revise content where possible to group the website under five key header topics:
 1. **About the Dialogue** - A summary of the Dialogue's purpose, its participants and information about our Working Groups/Steering Committees
 2. **News** - Latest News articles and Newsletters
 3. **Our Projects** - Information about specific environmental projects covering air quality, water, and rehabilitation
 4. **Community Engagement** - Information about our engagement projects (school tours, Virtual reality work) and community events we participate in
 5. **Business Support** - Procurement information and support for business stakeholders and information about business-themed events.

School Mine Tours Program

- The first half of the School Mine Tours Program schedule has been put on hold due to Covid-19 restrictions. Eleven schools and seven mine sites scheduled for 12 tours in May and June were advised in March of the need to postpone their tours. We are still closely monitoring the situation with the hope that a lifting of the restrictions will allow the 13 tours scheduled in July, August, and September to go ahead and potentially allow a rescheduling of the postponed tours if possible. At this stage, despite students and teachers heading back to school on May 25, excursions are not permitted and there is no indication of when they will be allowed. The program had been set for a record year in 2020 with 22 schools participating compared to 18 in 2019. The growth was due to three Scone area schools joining the schedule and St Catherine's High School returning to the program.

Community and stakeholder engagement

- The Dialogue's schedule for displays at community events has also been disrupted by Covid-19 with the Upper Hunter Show and Tocal Field Days cancelled. Next on the schedule are Broke Village Field Days and Singleton Show in September and the Hunter Coal Festival in October. Organisers are still planning on staging those events at this stage, however, the schedule could obviously be further impacted depending on whether or not the current social distancing restrictions are further relaxed.
- Our new-look and re-named newsletter was published in April. Now titled "The Dialogue", the newsletter has been redesigned and expanded to eight pages. Digital and print-ready versions have been shared with Dialogue stakeholders.

Media

- The Dialogue continues to report on its activities through local media and on its Facebook page. Recent articles have included a report on the completed March meetings followed by an update on our activities under the Covid-19 regulations, an article calling for interest from potential community representatives to join the Dialogue's joint working groups, a story detailing the Dialogue's organisational structure and an article on how the Dialogue's VR video experience could be used in the new PRIME school educational program.
- The Dialogue secretariat has also further developed its social media strategy to ensure better on line penetration through regular social media and website reports on Dialogue activities as well as potentially sharing stakeholders' posts where appropriate.

FOR INFORMATION

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UPDATE ON OTHER DIALOGUE WORKING GROUPS/COMMITTEES

The Dialogue has several Committees and Working Groups with differing objectives. It is important to share information and knowledge amongst all Dialogue groups where relevant to help inform discussions. Please see below for updates on various Dialogue Working Groups and Committees:

Joint Advisory Steering Committee

The Joint Advisory Steering Committee is yet to meet in 2020, following the impacts of COVID-19 during the first round of Working Group/Steering Committee meetings. Regular communication has been provided to the JASC members to update on Dialogue secretariat progress and the outcomes of the Joint Working Group meetings.

The JASC is scheduled to meet next on **Wednesday 24 June 2020** from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm, with a presentation from the Biodiversity Conservation Trust to better understand how this land is managed and what outcomes we are seeing in terms of increasing biodiversity and habitat from endangered species.

Communications Working Group

The Communications Working Group last met on **Tuesday 17 March 2020** via teleconference to discuss the key communication and engagement feedback received from 2019 Forum attendees. Key discussions included:

- Continued positive feedback on the school tours program and the proposed expansion to include several Scone schools in the 2020 program.
- The Website and social media were discussed, with members supportive of updating the website and increasing our social media presence and content.
- The Summary Forum video was well-received with members supporting continued content.
- Members noted the need to ensure the Dialogue is open and accessible to all, which will be reflected in more proactive engagement and regular updates in the Dialogue's newsletter.

The CWG is scheduled to meet **Tuesday 16 June** from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm.

Joint Economic and Social Development Working Group

The Joint Working Group last met on Wednesday 11 March 2020 to discuss the key economic and social development feedback received from 2019 Forum attendees. Feedback focused on:

- Procurement Information Hub - Positive initial feedback on this resource was received, and members were keen to learn more about positive interactions between suppliers and industry that have led to a successful outcome.
- Procurement Business Events - Positive feedback to the business events was received in 2019, with members keen to explore additional events in 2020 that build on this success and incorporate all members and different themes/formats such as a 'Meet the Buyers' event.
- Learning more about key community programs addressing social issues in the Upper Hunter to determine if the Dialogue could assist in this space.
- The Dialogue's Forum summary video was also well-received and shared amongst members.

The JESDWG is scheduled following this Joint Working Group meeting on **Wednesday 10 June 2020**, 1:00pm to 3:00 pm, with a presentation from Debbie Barwick, NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce, on her organisation's current activities and priorities.

FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

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OTHER BUSINESS

Updates from Working Group members

To encourage greater awareness of items of interest across the Dialogue's network of stakeholders, the Dialogue Secretariat encourages Working Group members to share updates on their current or future activities and projects that may be of interest to the Joint Environment Working Group members, or the Dialogue more generally.

FOR INFORMATION

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NEXT MEETING / CLOSE

Members may note the next Joint Working Group meeting date for 2020:

- Wednesday 9 September 2020

FOR INFORMATION