

# Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue

Final and Temporary Rehabilitation Principles and Commitments

2015 Report by BHP Billiton Mt Arthur Coal

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Final and Temporary Rehabilitation Principles and Commitments

## Introduction

The nine coal producers of the Upper Hunter, through the Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue have agreed to this set of principles and commitments with regard to final and temporary rehabilitation. The Principles and Commitments have been developed with advice and guidance from the UHMD Joint Working Group – Land Management which is a stakeholder and industry group.

The Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue has two five year goals with regard to land management:

- *Goal 1 To decrease the time that disturbed areas are left without final or temporary cover, recognising that different mining operations are at different points in rehabilitation.*
- *Goal 2 To achieve a consistent level of best practice, quality, integrated rehabilitation – both within the industry and with future land uses - across the Upper Hunter and to be a responsible steward of the land.*

The primary focus of the Rehabilitation Principles and Commitments is to contribute to Goal 1. A number of other projects are underway to progress Goal 1. The industry participants in the UHMD acknowledge the importance of clear goals for rehabilitation developed through consultation with community and regulators, continuing to improve rehabilitation techniques and sharing innovative and successful rehabilitation techniques within the industry. Projects under Goal 2 focus on continuous improvement of rehabilitation practices.

## Principles and Commitments

The Upper Hunter coal producers will publicly report against the Principles and Commitments on an annual basis. The reporting will be aggregated by the NSW Minerals Council and shared with the community. Table 1 sets out the six principles and provides a description of how each will be reported against.

**Table 1 – Principles and Commitments**

Principle	Reporting
<p><b>Principle 1 – Include rehabilitation planning in mine planning</b></p> <p>Planning for rehabilitation should be integrated into the mine planning process and should include allocating adequate and dedicated resources to achieve the planned rehabilitation outcomes.</p>	<p>Planning for rehabilitation is undertaken by the Production Planning, Environment and Mine Services departments. Mid-term mine planners allocate proposed rehabilitation areas as part of the five year mine planning process. These areas are reported by Environment in the Mining Operations Plan (MOP). Topsoil recovery, placement and spreading are undertaken by Mine Services with technical advice provided by the Environment department. Production Planning also completes the design of overburden emplacements, including planning, scheduling and supervision of reshaping works to achieve the final approved landform. The Environment department is accountable for seeding and treating of topsoil and monitoring of the success of rehabilitation.</p>
<p><b>Principle 2 – Undertake progressive rehabilitation</b></p> <p><i>Companies should undertake rehabilitation progressively, with the objective of ensuring that rehabilitation is as close as possible to active mining.</i></p>	<p>Rehabilitation at Mt Arthur Coal is completed progressively, within the constraints of operationally reserved land. The main mining disturbed areas available for rehabilitation are the overburden emplacements. As these emplacements advance and reach the approved elevation, they are progressively reshaped, topsoiled and revegetated. With the exception of emplacement areas reserved for operational requirements, such as haul roads of future mining access, all emplacement areas that have reached their approved elevation have been rehabilitated, or allocated for rehabilitation within the current MOP period.</p>
<p><b>Principle 3 – Minimise time that disturbed areas are left without vegetation</b></p>	<p>Mt Arthur Coal limits the area of vegetation cleared ahead of mining to those areas proposed for further ground disturbance within the subsequent 3 months. This assists in minimising the overall area of site disturbance.</p>

Principle	Reporting
<p>Companies should actively seek to minimise the time that land is left without cover during mining. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Taking steps to ensure that rehabilitation is commenced within 12 months of land becoming available for rehabilitation</li> <li>▪ Utilising methods of temporary rehabilitation<sup>1</sup>, such as aerial seeding of overburden and other disturbed areas where permanent rehabilitation has not commenced.</li> </ul>	<p>Where woodland communities are cleared, vegetation is mulched (following recovery of suitable habitat trees and logs) and left on the ground to provide a protective mulch layer, until stripped and recovered with the underlying topsoil. Peripheral land disturbed for infrastructure construction projects is required to be rehabilitated as part of the project scope, using rapid rehabilitation methods such as hydroseeding. These measures reduce the potential for dust, erosion or weed establishment in those cleared areas.</p> <p>Operationally available mining disturbed land is progressively rehabilitated, as discussed previously. Where disturbed land is operationally unavailable for rehabilitation in the near future, aerial seeding of those areas with a pasture seed/fertiliser mix is used as a temporary dust suppression measure. Mt Arthur Coal has a well-established aerial seeding program, having commenced in 2010, during the reporting period Mt Arthur Coal aerial seeded approximately 210 hectares. This is an increase in area aerial seeded, compared to previous years, with 100 hectares seeded in FY14.</p>
<p><b>Principle 4 – Prioritise areas of rehabilitation and temporary cover to reduce impacts</b></p>	<p>The areas of mining disturbed land that tend to represent the greatest impact, from a dust generation and visual aesthetics perspective, are the overburden emplacements. Overburden emplacements are prioritised for rehabilitation as soon as operationally available and, where not available for final rehabilitation, are targeted for temporary vegetation establishment via the aerial seeding program.</p>
<p>Companies should prioritise rehabilitation and temporary cover in those areas where leaving land exposed will have the most impact. The following areas should be considered to have priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Areas that have the greatest impact on visual amenity, such as areas that face townships, residences, or the highway</li> <li>▪ Areas that have the potential to generate dust leaving the site</li> <li>▪ Areas that are important for biodiversity, such as rehabilitation adjoining or providing connectivity to remnant vegetation.</li> </ul>	<p>The priority for rehabilitation at Mt Arthur Coal is the construction and rehabilitation of overburden in Visual Dump 1 (VD1). VD1 will be the highest manmade landform on the Mt Arthur Coal mine site and represents the most visible mine feature from the residential and publicly accessible areas to the northwest of the mine. Placement of overburden on VD1, and rehabilitation to box gum woodland, is a priority to ensure it achieves its intended function of providing a visual and noise shield from future mining operations.</p> <p>Rehabilitation of Saddlers Pit emplacement areas are also a priority. As well as disturbance minimisation (and associated dust/erosion reduction benefits), achieving final rehabilitation in this area will connect Mt Arthur/Mt Arthur Conservation with Saddlers Creek Conservation areas, which links into wider regional vegetation corridors.</p>

<sup>1</sup> Temporary rehabilitation describes reshaping, revegetation and other rehabilitation techniques that are used for purposes other than final rehabilitation. This includes such initiatives as seeding overburden emplacement areas to reduce erosion, which are only temporary.

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<p><b>Principle 5 – Meet target for rehabilitation progress identified in the Mining Operations Plan</b></p> <p><i>Each company should meet the annual target for rehabilitation quantity (area) set in the Mining Operations Plans for each of its mines.</i></p>	<p>For the MOP period FY14/15, Mt Arthur Coal achieved 111.5 ha of rehabilitation. This met the rehabilitation commitment of 85 ha for the period, as reported in the relevant MOPs for the reporting period, as well as an additional 26 hectares of rehabilitation in FY15 to account for rehabilitated areas that were disturbed during FY14.</p>
<p><b>Principle 6 – Set quality targets for rehabilitation in the Mining Operations Plan and implement a monitoring program to measure performance</b></p> <p><i>Each company should include quality targets for the various types of rehabilitation in the Mining Operations Plan for each of its mines. A monitoring program to measure the performance of rehabilitation areas against the quality targets should be implemented at each of its mines.</i></p>	<p>The relevant Mt Arthur Coal MOPs for the reporting period presents performance objectives and completion criteria for mined land rehabilitation. These objectives and criteria describe the desired quality targets expected for each type of rehabilitation community to be established, including pasture, box gum woodland communities and native woodland corridors. The site rehabilitation and ecological monitoring program consists of the following programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecological development monitoring program for rehabilitation within the Box Gum woodland establishment area and native woodland corridor</li> <li>• Landform stability monitoring program for all rehabilitation areas</li> <li>• Grazing potential monitoring program for pasture rehabilitation areas</li> </ul>