

THE

UPPER HUNTER MINING DIALOGUE NEWSLETTER

DIALOGUE

JULY 2022

ON THE ROAD AGAIN!

**SCHOOL TOURS
ROLL OUT TO MINES**

**MAKING LIFE
BETTER FOR ALL**

**FORUM BRINGS TOGETHER
UPPER HUNTER COMMUNITY**

**TAKING CARE
OF BUSINESS**

**BUYERS MEET MINE
INDUSTRY SUPPLIERS**



WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE HUNTER

The Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue (the Dialogue) was established in 2011 by the region's miners in response to community concerns about infrastructure and services, mine rehabilitation, water use and air quality.

The Dialogue brings together local miners, community and business leaders, environment groups, residents, regulators and other industries to better understand and address these challenges together and create a better life for all in the Upper Hunter.

The Dialogue is a collaborative effort addressing local community priorities by understanding its concerns and then working together to develop and implement solutions.

If you're interested in becoming involved in the Dialogue, please register your interest via email to info@miningdialogue.com.au



Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue

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Find us on Facebook

THE WORD FROM THE CHAIR

Sarah Withell
UHMD Chair



Here we are again – halfway through another busy year.

The first six months of 2022 have again been eventful for the Dialogue.

While Covid-19 is very much still around we, along with the Upper Hunter community, are getting back to "business as usual".

After two years of meeting via video conferencing platform Zoom, the Dialogue is back to face-to-face meetings at the Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue Resource Centre in Singleton.

We are busy planning our Community Forum after two years of postponements of this important event due to Covid restrictions.

The Community Forum is now scheduled for November and will bring together people from across our community. Representatives from the mining industry, government and the Upper Hunter community will come together for a day of collaboration to prioritise future Dialogue projects and activities.

This is a very important event on the Dialogue's schedule and community representatives interested in the future of the Upper Hunter are very much encouraged to attend. We would love to see some new faces and we are looking forward to catching up again with our existing supporters.

The Dialogue is also back engaging face-to-face with the community.

Our community display has returned to local shows and events which allows us the opportunity to meet with community members we wouldn't perhaps normally get to hold a "dialogue" with.

The community engagement events offer a double opportunity – the hundreds of discussions we have

with community members at the local events allow us meet with new community representatives while also allowing us to spread the word about the Dialogue and its mission to make the Upper Hunter a better place for all to live.

Our School Mine Tours Program is also back on the road and, while we have had some disruption due to wet weather and Covid sidelining teachers in schools, we are on track to complete about 28 tours with about 1000 students and their teachers visiting one of the Upper Hunter's working coal mines.

We have also got back to business, working in conjunction with the Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce and Industry, hosting a Procurement Networking Event in June. These events bring together local supplier business people and procurement personnel from Upper Hunter mines.

Discussions between suppliers and industry representatives foster opportunities which benefit both the mining industry and local businesses which is obviously a positive economic result for the community overall.

Speaking of positive economics, the Muswellbrook event was a double-header for business. Preceding the Procurement Networking Event, local business people had the opportunity to hear NSW Minerals Council CEO Stephen Galilee deliver a mining economic update. Mr Galilee's presentation highlighted a positive future for the Upper Hunter and the mining sector.

Results are now in from our Community Perceptions Survey which was conducted in late 2021. This survey, coupled with data gleaned from our community engagement activities, gives us a clear focus on priorities for the future.

As always, the Dialogue is keen to have input from community representatives; If you are a member of the Upper Hunter community and want to make the region a better place for all to live, please express your interest via email at info@miningdialogue.com.au

TACKLING THE ISSUES



The Dialogue's Community Forum returns in November to bring together community, government and industry.

COMMUNITY FORUM A COLLABORATION FOR THE FUTURE

Community, government and mining industry representatives will come together for a day of collaboration and planning at the Dialogue's Community Forum on November 16.

The Community Forum is a valuable event in the Dialogue calendar.

It brings together Dialogue partners – from mining, government and community – to understand the key issues, concerns and opportunities that need to be addressed.

A series of updates from the mining industry and local and state government will be provided as well as a facilitated feedback session for all participants. This input will shape the future direction of the Dialogue. A number of networking opportunities will also be provided throughout the day including over morning tea and lunch.

The Community Forum input allows the Dialogue to weigh up priorities

when developing its future projects and direction.

Community representatives interested in the future of the Upper Hunter are strongly encouraged to attend.

To be held at the Muswellbrook RSL Club, the 2022 Community Forum will be the first in three years as the 2020 and 2021 events were postponed due to Covid-19.

Mining Dialogue members are working to finalise the agenda for the day, however it is expected to have an over-arching theme of transition and breaking down what it means for the future of the Upper Hunter. Topics being short-listed for discussion include future land use of mined land and potential transition and economic diversification strategies post-mining.

While the event is free, registration is essential. Registration details will be available soon on the Dialogue website.

MINING LAND-USE REVIEW

The Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue has long advocated for a review of the planning system to allow for beneficial use of land post-mining.

The Dialogue welcomes a recommendation in the draft Hunter Regional Plan 2041 that the NSW Government consider how land currently being used for mining can be better utilised post mining as part of its new blueprint for the future of the Hunter region.

The Dialogue believes a review of the current system is a key component to planning for an ongoing robust economic future as the region's economy changes and becomes more diversified to other economy-driving industries and businesses.

The current planning system generally requires that mine land be rehabilitated to native bushland or, in some cases, as grazing land, but does not take into account the existing valuable infrastructure in place and development potential of Upper Hunter mine land.

That infrastructure, which includes railway access, electrical supply, large industrial buildings and water supply coupled with transport routes and proximity to the Newcastle Port will be extremely valuable assets for transitioning to new industries and driving employment in the Hunter's future.

A review is timely considering the imminent closure of the Muswellbrook Coal mine and the recent announcement by BHP of the planned closure of Mt Arthur Coal mine in 2030.

The Dialogue's Community Forum in November will have a focus on post-mining land-use and economic diversification in the Upper Hunter.



ON THE ROAD AGAIN

The Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue's School Mine Tours Program is on the road for 2022.

The program started to travel its busy 2022 route in April with 22 tours scheduled in May and June before the program takes a winter "recess" in July and August and then hits the road again in September visiting one of 12 participating Upper Hunter mines along the way.

The mine tours are offered to all Year 5 and Year 9 students in the Upper Hunter and give students and their teachers a first-hand look at a working mine while learning about the benefits and impacts of mining in the Upper Hunter.

While wet weather and Covid-19 in schools has forced the postponement of some tours this year, the 2022 program is currently expected to complete about 28 tours and offer about 1000 students and their teachers a close up experience with Upper Hunter mining.

The tours are free and are offered to all schools in the Upper Hunter region. Schools from the Singleton, Muswellbrook and Scone catchments are participating in the 2022 program.

Following a call from community representatives at the Dialogue's 2016 Community Forum, the program was designed in 2017 by a Dialogue Working Group made up of teachers, community, mining industry and local government representatives.

Using educational materials and messaging developed by the Dialogue Working Group, the tours program offers a fact-based, first-hand education experience to teach local students about the impacts and benefits of coal mining in the Upper Hunter.



PRIORITIES FOR OUR FUTURE

FINDINGS FOCUS ON STRATEGIES

Rehabilitation, the future of mining and air quality should be the Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue's key areas of focus for the future, according to the Dialogue's recently released Community Perceptions Survey.

The Dialogue's November Community Forum agenda will incorporate the survey's key findings to focus on building relevant strategies for the future.

The survey is the third of its kind and was conducted in late 2021 and its findings released earlier this year. Current and past Dialogue stakeholders were interviewed about their perceptions of mining in the Upper Hunter and what future strategic initiatives should be developed by the Dialogue.

According to the survey, air quality remains a strong issue with the community and needs to remain a focus for the Dialogue.

The Dialogue has a history of delivering air quality projects to improve community awareness including its air quality monitoring data analysis, community weather forecasting and air quality information resources projects.

Likewise, the survey indicates that rehabilitation also remains a priority for Dialogue participants. This finding is backed by community surveys conducted by the Dialogue at local events and shows. Those surveys have historically rated rehabilitation as the strongest area of interest within the community.

The Dialogue has developed a number of current and past rehabilitation-focussed initiatives including its rehabilitation principles and commitments project which tracks the amount of mining disturbed land rehabilitated each year, studies of cattle grazing on rehabilitated land



ENGAGING WITH COMMUNITY

The Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue is engaging with the local community at a range of shows and events.

The Dialogue's 2022 community engagement schedule so far has seen the Dialogue on display at the Upper Hunter Show, Tocal Field Days, Muswellbrook Coal Open Day and Muswellbrook Procurement Networking Event.

Throughout the year, the Dialogue attends local events and shows across the Hunter with its interactive displays to educate and

inform people about the Dialogue's activities as well as conduct surveys to pinpoint the community's current issues and interests.

Attendance at the community events is valuable as it allows the Dialogue to communicate directly with members of the community who otherwise may not have any connection with the Dialogue.

Upcoming community engagement events include the Singleton Show, Bengalla Open Day, Hunter Coal Festival and the Dialogue's Community Forum.

and investigations into the beneficial reuse of voids.

The future of mining is a growing concern for the community, according to the Perceptions Survey, with a strong need for strategic planning to ensure an ongoing robust economy for the Upper Hunter.

Through its Economic and Social

Development Working Groups, the Dialogue is collaborating with local businesses and business organisations to build current and future economic opportunities.

The Dialogue is preparing a detailed response to the findings with the aim of further developing initiatives focussing on areas of interest identified by the survey.



ABOVE: NSW Minerals Council CEO Stephen Galilee delivers his mining economic update: RIGHT: Mining company representatives meet with suppliers, from top, BHP/C-RES, MACH Energy Mount Pleasant Operation, Bengalla Mining Company and Thiess.



EVENTS TAKING CARE OF LOCAL BUSINESS

The Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue and Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce “meant business” at a June business networking event and mining economic update.

In a double opportunity for Upper Hunter businesses, the June 7 Procurement Networking Event at Muswellbrook RSL Club was preceded by a breakfast address by NSW Minerals Council CEO Stephen Galilee who delivered a mining economic update.

The Procurement Networking Events are jointly organised by the Dialogue and local chambers of commerce and offered to local businesses.

The events give local supplier businesses the opportunity to network face to face with procurement personnel from Upper Hunter mining companies and develop relationships mutually valuable to both business and the mining industry.

At the Muswellbrook event, more than 60 representatives from local supplier businesses met with procurement representatives from BHP-C-Res, Thiess, Bengalla Mining Company

and MACH Energy’s Mount Pleasant Operation.

Mr Galilee’s presentation to more than 100 people over breakfast highlighted the ongoing economic contribution of mining in the Hunter region.

Using data collated by the NSW Minerals Council from its membership, Mr Galilee said mining contributed \$6.1 Billion in direct spending in the Hunter in 2020-21.

In the same year, the industry also provided 13,250 direct mining jobs in the region and supported 3160 Hunter supplier businesses.

Mr Galilee also said the future of coal mining appeared positive with embedded demand from overseas markets.

He noted the overwhelming bulk of NSW coal was exported with nearly 90 per cent being shipped overseas.

While there was some uncertainty about the future of some local coal-fired electricity plants which used domestically supplied coal, exports were increasing with growing demand from overseas and sustained positive market conditions.



WE WOULD LOVE TO KNOW WHAT YOU THINK

Fill in our online survey to help us help make the Upper Hunter a better place for all to live. Simply scan the QR code or visit www.bit.ly/dialogue-survey



DO YOU WANT TO HELP MAKE THE UPPER HUNTER A BETTER PLACE FOR ALL TO LIVE?



Established in 2011 by the region's miners in response to community concerns, the Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue welcomes community representatives as valuable and equal voices on its Joint Working Groups.

The Dialogue is a collaborative effort that addresses the local community's priorities by understanding its concerns and then working together to develop and implement solutions.

Focus areas

- Water
- Land management
- Emissions and health
- Economic and social development

Preserving vital resources for all

Minimising environmental impacts

Leaving a long term positive legacy

The Dialogue promotes

- Listening to and working in collaboration with the community to address concerns.
- Providing a reliable source of information that builds trust between the mining industry and the community.
- Coexistence with other industries.
- Contribution to a healthy living environment and stronger community in the Upper Hunter.



**Upper Hunter
Mining Dialogue**

If you are interested in helping make the Upper Hunter a better place for all please contact us by email at info@miningdialogue.com.au