

THE DIALOGUE

WINTER 2024



UPPER HUNTER MINING DIALOGUE NEWSLETTER

COMMUNITY FORUM IN FOCUS

With plans well underway for this year's Upper Hunter Dialogue Community Forum, find out how you can help shape the positive future for our region.

A WORD FROM THE DIALOGUE SECRETARIAT

Welcome to the Winter Newsletter!

Planning is well underway for the 2024 Community Forum to be held this year on Tuesday, October 29, at the Singleton Civic Centre. The Forum brings together a wide range of stakeholders to discuss and 'workshop' effective responses to key issues and opportunities related to mining.

Many of the themes to be addressed at the 2024 Community Forum will follow on from the discussions at our 2022 Forum in Muswellbrook which focused on 'Planning for the Future'. Attendees can expect to hear more about issues such as the newly announced Regional Jobs and Investment Authorities, the regional economic outlook and future of coal, post-mining land use and other topical issues focused on the future of the Upper Hunter region, alongside updates on the environmentally focused issues of water stewardship, air quality, and mine rehabilitation.

The Forum is free to attend, and registrations are now open. More details about the Forum and a link to the registration are provided on page 5. We look forward to welcoming you and strongly encourage community members to attend.

Other aspects of our community engagement program are continuing, including the School Mine Tours, updates for Community Consultative Committees, active participation in a range of community and other networks and interactive displays at the Newcastle Show and Upper Hunter Show in Muswellbrook. These networks and events enable us to connect with the community and stay informed about relevant issues and/or concerns.

In this issue we are highlighting our recently published 2023 Air Quality Update which this year is supported by a series of new infographics. Since 2019, in response to concerns from stakeholders about the region's air quality, the Dialogue has engaged independent consultants to analyse and report on air quality across the Upper Hunter.



Through this analysis and reporting, the Dialogue aims to better inform stakeholders about air quality in the region, by providing fact-based information. Since the project commenced in 2019, this analysis has found that air quality in the Upper Hunter has changed, but these changes are generally consistent with changes observed across the rest of NSW.

The Dialogue's other annual environmental projects are also progressing, including collecting data for the Rehabilitation Principles and Commitments and Water Accounting Framework projects. With rehabilitation statistics dating back to 2012 and the water figures to 2014, both projects provide useful data on mined land rehabilitation progress and water usage in the Upper Hunter. Data for 2023 is currently being collected and the results are expected to be finalised and released for the rehabilitation project in August and for the water accounting in September.

In this issue we also provide a brief recap on the history, purpose and operation of the Dialogue. We hope you find this informative and invite you to find out more or discuss becoming a member of the Dialogue, by emailing us at info@miningdialogue.com.au.

James Barben
Secretariat, Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue

JOINT ADVISORY STEERING COMMITTEE MEET WITH HON. EMILY SUVAAL MLC



Government MLC Emily Suvaal joined the Dialogue's Joint Advisory Steering Committee meeting in late March and was briefed on the role of the Dialogue and its key projects and initiatives since it was established.

Ms Suvaal provided an update on key government initiatives, particularly in relation to economic diversification and future land use. Dialogue members had an in-depth and constructive discussion with Ms Suvaal on a range of key issues, including:

- The role and remit of the proposed Future Jobs and Investment Authority
- Issues around post-mining land use, including the certification of completed mine rehabilitation;
- The need for more information and awareness to improve the community's understanding about transition and to set realistic expectations.
- The need for more economic input data to inform and understand what will be needed to sustain and grow Upper Hunter communities in the longer term.

- A strategic vision from government to guide and effectively coordinate future planning; and
- The growing impact of a raft of proposed renewable projects on local communities and councils in the region.

The discussion with Ms Suvaal enabled members of the Dialogue, to hear directly from a member of the government on key Hunter-focused issues and to provide feedback on local issues for Ms Suvaal to raise directly with her government colleagues.

Following this discussion, the Dialogue secretariat provided Dialogue members with an update on key environmental projects, notably the draft Air Quality Analysis Update for the 2023 calendar year and the rehabilitation reporting project.

Muswellbrook and Singleton Councils provided updates on their key economic and social development initiatives. Alongside this, Singleton and Muswellbrook Business Chambers provided an overview of their recent and/or ongoing initiatives and upcoming events.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION AT THE 2024 COMMUNITY FORUM



We look forward to welcoming you to the Dialogue’s Community Forum which will be held this year on Tuesday, October 29 at the Singleton Civic Centre.

What is the purpose of the Community Forum?

The Forum brings together a diverse range of Dialogue partners and stakeholders – from mining, government, interest groups and local residents, to clearly understand the key issues, concerns and opportunities related to mining, and to ‘workshop’ potential responses. The Forum also enables the Dialogue to ensure its strategy and projects are aligned to community priorities.

What issues will be discussed?

The 2024 Forum will cover issues that are front of mind for the community. Many of the themes follow on from the discussions at the 2022 Forum in Muswellbrook which focused on ‘Planning for the Future’

Expect to hear more about issues such as the newly announced Regional Jobs and Investment Authorities, the regional economic outlook and future of coal, post-mining land use and other topical issues focused on the future of the Upper Hunter region. Alongside this, there will be updates on environmentally focused issues such as water stewardship, air quality and mine rehabilitation.

More information about the Forum agenda and presenters will be provided closer to the event.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER NOW](#)

or visit:

miningdialogue.com.au/engagement/2024-community-forum

“Events such as the Community Forum are important to keep the community and other key stakeholders engaged in the conversations and help to shape the future we want to see“

Jessica Rouse, 2024 Community Forum Facilitator



Why should you attend?

The forum presents a unique opportunity for a wide range of stakeholders to come together to have meaningful conversations about the key issues, concerns and opportunities related to mining. Importantly, these conversations help to shape effective and collaborative strategies and actions to respond to these issues.

Community members are strongly encouraged to attend – your views and ideas are critical to guide the work of the Dialogue and to shaping a sustainable future for the Upper Hunter.

Important Info

Date:
Tuesday 29 October 2024

Time:
8:30 am to 3:00 pm

Location:
Singleton Civic Centre Auditorium

Meet our new Community Forum Facilitator:

After several years as the Forum Facilitator, Di Sneddon has handed on the baton to Jessica Rouse (pictured above).

The Dialogue acknowledges and thanks Di for her contribution to the success of the Community Forum and welcomes her ongoing participation and contribution as a valued member of the Dialogue.

Jessica will be known to many of you through her various radio news roles and is currently a journalist at @ The Coalface Magazine.

Jess is passionate about local communities and their stories, and believes the Forum provides a vital opportunity to talk about what we want our communities to look like in 10, 20, 50 years' time and what needs to be done to bring communities together in the process.

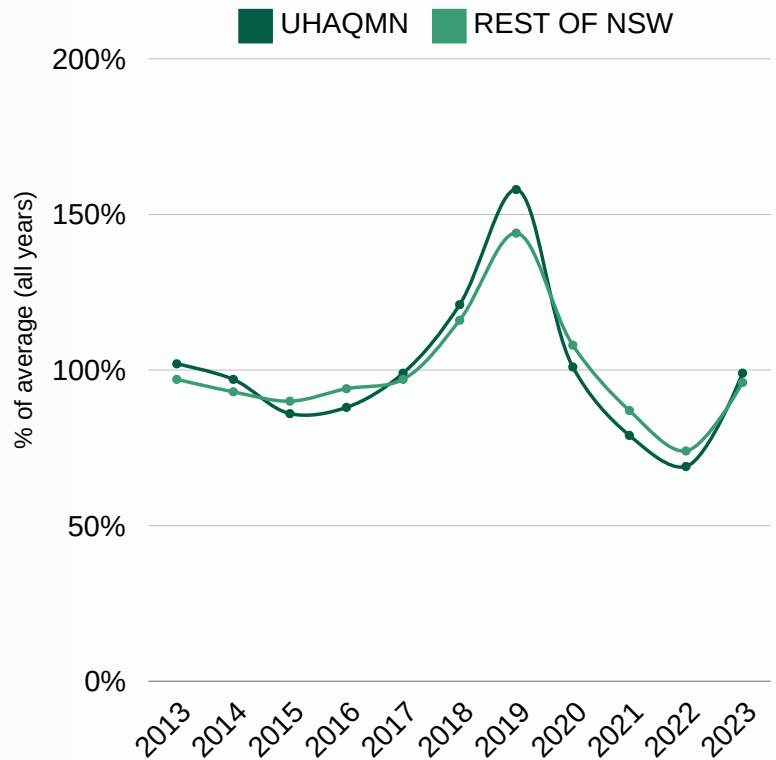
2023 UPPER HUNTER AIR QUALITY DATA RELEASED

The Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue has released their 2023 Air Quality Update. The Update analyses and reports on key aspects of air quality across the Upper Hunter region, including concentrations of particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10) for the 2023 calendar year, as well as examining the relationship between particulate matter and other factors such as rainfall and raw coal production.

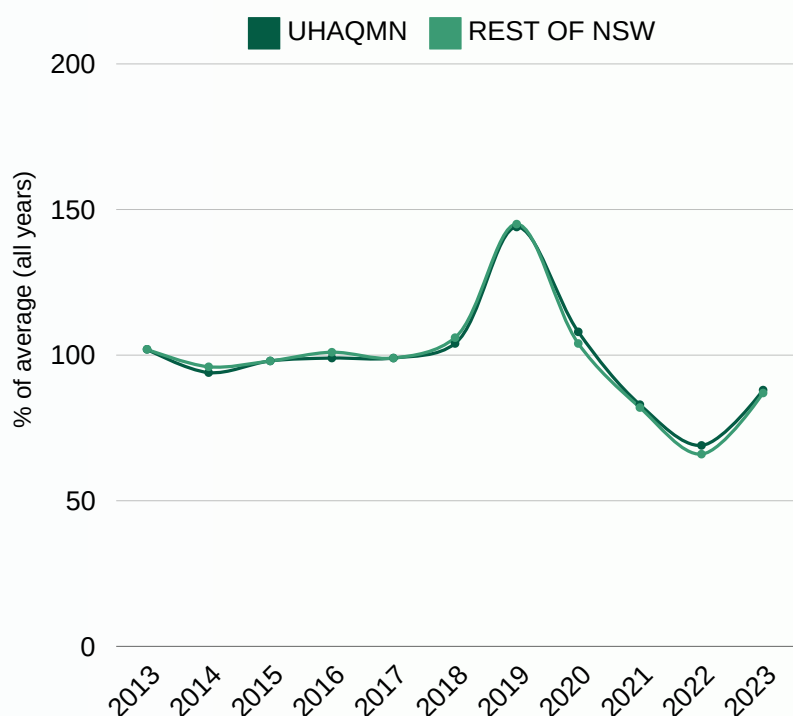
Since 2019, The Dialogue has engaged an independent air quality specialist (led by Damon Roddis at Zephyr Consulting), to analyse and report on air quality across the Upper Hunter. This analysis was in response to concerns from stakeholders about the air quality in the Upper Hunter. Through this analysis and reporting, the Dialogue aims to better inform stakeholders about air quality in the region, by providing fact-based information. This yearly update follows on from the initial report delivered by ERM Australia-Pacific Pty Ltd, which was peer reviewed by a senior principal research scientist at the CSIRO.

Each year, the Dialogue analyses publicly available data from 14 NSW Government Air Quality Monitoring Stations, including Singleton, Muswellbrook, Warkworth and Wybong. The analysis examines changes in concentrations of PM10 (coarse inhalable particles) and PM2.5 (fine inhalable particles), along with the correlation between rainfall and particulate matter, and the relationship between raw coal production and PM10. This data is compared to data from all other NSW Government monitoring regions across NSW.

PM10 variability between UHAQMN and NSW
particulate matter 10 micrometres or less in diameter



PM2.5 variability between UHAQMN and NSW
particulate matter 2.5 micrometres or less in diameter

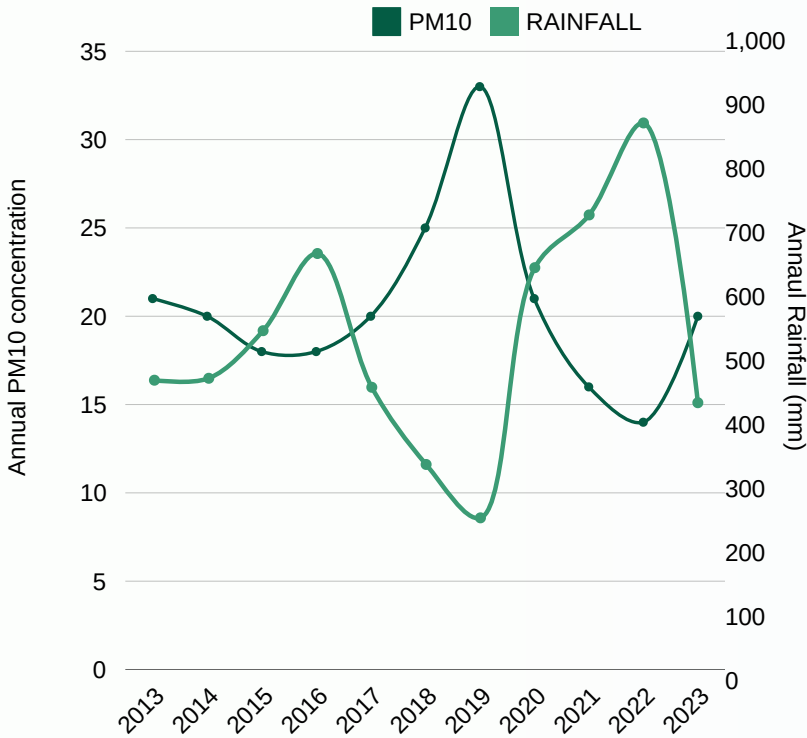




Be sure to visit the [Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue Website](#) for the full 2023 Air Quality report and information regarding the previous project results.

PM10 and Rainfall

particulate matter 10 micrometres or less in diameter



Key findings in the 2023 update include:

1. PM10 concentrations within the Upper Hunter are generally consistent with changes experienced across the rest of NSW.

2. Changes in PM2.5 are generally consistent with those observed elsewhere in NSW.

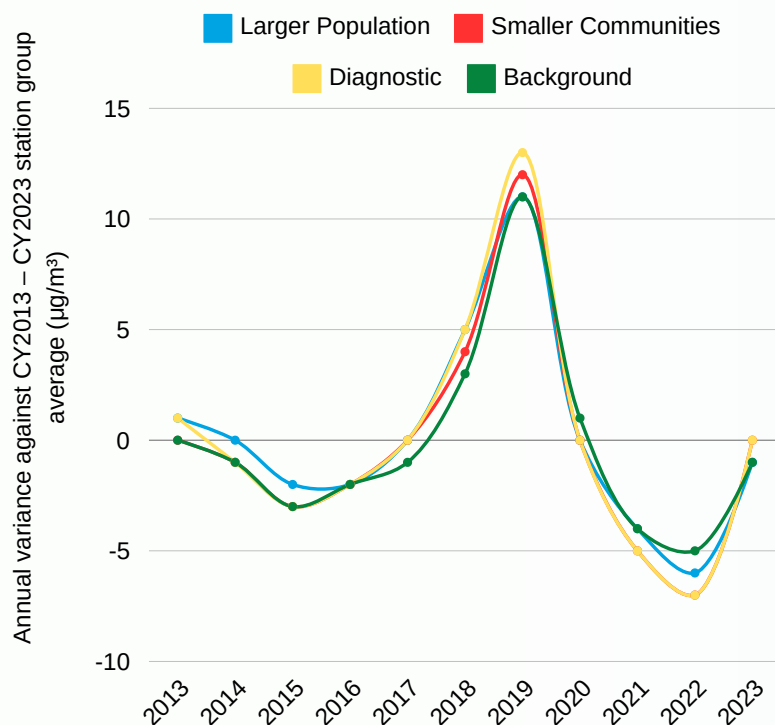
3. There is a correlation between rainfall and particulate matter concentrations across the Upper Hunter Air Quality Monitoring Network.

4. Changes in Upper Hunter PM10 concentrations are associated with regional conditions and are indicative of a minimal change in the contribution from local emission sources inclusive of mining.

5. The relationship between raw coal production and PM10 continues to be investigated and closely watched, though the report noted that recent fluctuations in PM10 concentrations were anticipated to be related to ambient temperatures and the amount of rainfall the region has received between 2019 and 2022, rather than a reduction in coal production.

PM10 variability across sub-divisions of UHAQMN

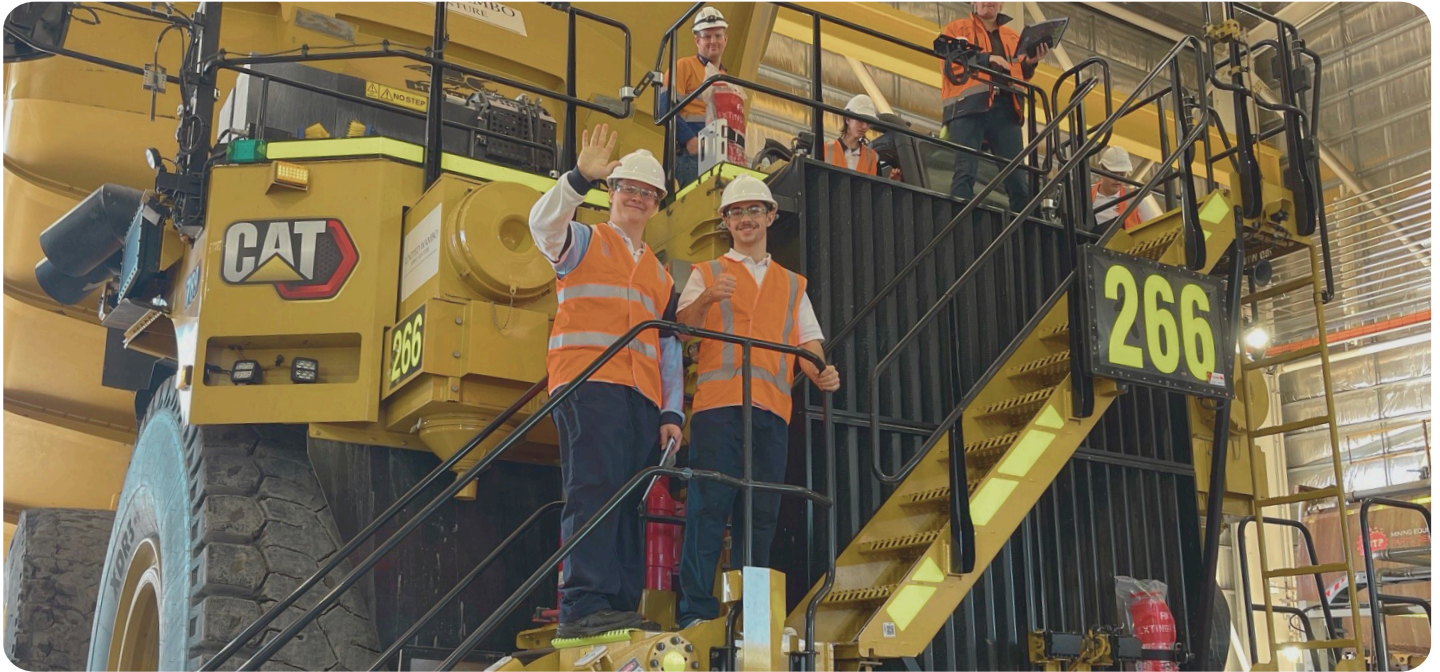
particulate matter 10 micrometres or less in diameter



SCHOOL MINE TOURS BACK IN FULL SWING

The popular Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue School Mine Tours returned in May, with 38 Year Five students from Denman Public and Sandy Hollow Public Schools visiting Bengalla Mine.

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During the tours, students met with mine staff including geologists, mining engineers and environmental scientists. They enjoyed a drone tour of the mine and had a first-hand experience of the truck and excavator simulators.

Since then, the tours have continued with students from Singleton High School visiting Wambo United where they toured the maintenance workshop and were able to climb onto and sit in the driver's seat of a truck.

Students from Muswellbrook Public enjoyed a highly interactive tour of Bengalla Mine and Year 5 and Year 6 students from St Joseph's Primary School in Denman enjoyed a guided walk through some of the award-winning rehabilitation at Mangoola Mine.



Now in its 5th year of full operation, the tours demystify the mining process through a fact-based, firsthand educational experience. Students and teachers learn about the impacts of mining and the practical benefits to our everyday lives.

The 2024 program is scheduled to deliver 19 tours to 9 mine sites for approximately 700 students from primary and secondary schools across the Upper Hunter.



INDUSTRY WATER ACCOUNTING FRAMEWORK DATA COLLECTION UNDERWAY

The Dialogue's annual Water Accounting Framework project has commenced, with the Dialogue secretariat currently seeking industry's water use data for the 2023 Calendar Year.

All Upper Hunter operations use water accounting models, and alongside additional relevant regional information (Hunter river flow levels, rainfall), the Dialogue can report on industry's water use in the context of other major water users (e.g. businesses, farmers, and the community).



The project has greatly improved the transparency of the mining industry's use and reuse of water in the region. Now in its tenth year of operation, having commenced in 2014, this project is typically reported on in the later stages of the year, with preliminary results expected by the end of Q3, 2024.

REHABILITATION PRINCIPLES AND COMMITMENTS PROJECT PROGRESSING

The Dialogue's annual Rehabilitation Principles and Commitments project has commenced, with the Dialogue secretariat currently seeking industry's mine rehabilitation and disturbance data for the 2023 Calendar Year.

All Upper Hunter operations are required to report on their disturbance activity and rehabilitation progress onsite to the Resources Regulator on an annual basis. Following the introduction of recent rehabilitation reforms in 2021, industry submits an annual rehabilitation report and forward program to the Regulator to provide annual updates on their progressive rehabilitation progress.

The Dialogue is working with the Resources Regulator to source data for 2023, and expects to report on this in Q3, 2024.

As the Regulator's annual reporting data features reporting categories different to the Dialogue's project, there may be some changes from our historical data due to minor definitional differences, however the reporting will continue to highlight the total mining footprint of the Upper Hunter as well as current rehabilitation underway and disturbed land awaiting rehabilitation.

The project has greatly improved the transparency of the mining industry's rehabilitation progress. As this project commenced in 2012, it now has over twelve years of trending data, providing valuable insights into the growth of rehabilitation across the region over the past decade.



THE DIALOGUE TURNS 13: OVER A DECADE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As the Dialogue has now been operating for 13 years, it is timely to provide a brief recap on our history, purpose, and operations.

In 2010 in response to increasing community concern about the cumulative impacts of mining, the NSW Minerals Council engaged the Centre for Corporate Responsibility to undertake a comprehensive survey with community members and other key stakeholders to better understand these concerns. The results of the survey were shared with stakeholders through face-to-face meetings, and with the broader community through community information evenings in Singleton, Muswellbrook and Denman.

These consultations indicated that concerns about cumulative impacts in the region fell into four broad categories:

- Emissions and health
- Land management and rehabilitation
- Water
- Social impacts and the provision of infrastructure

In order to effectively address these issues and concerns, the Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue was established in 2011, with working groups made up of representatives from the mining industry, community, local government, interest groups and local businesses to effectively respond to these key issues and concerns.

Values and approach:

The Dialogue is committed to be a neutral/apolitical forum, to maintain transparency and be a reliable source of factual information and continues to consult key stakeholders to understand their changing concerns and priorities. The Dialogue achieves this through its tripartite governance structure lead by the Joint Advisory Steering Committee that includes community, local government and industry representatives. Our working groups also include community, industry, local and state

government members from whom we take feedback in addition to our community surveys and Community Forum held every two years.

Structure and Operation:

Through the collaborative efforts of a Joint Advisory Steering Committee (JASC) and three working groups, the Dialogue develops and implements projects or initiatives to respond to identified issues and/or to support relevant outcomes from strategic work by member organisations. The structure of the Dialogue changes over time to reflect the current key issues and stakeholder priorities.



The JASC and Working Groups typically meet on a quarterly basis for respectful discussions around key issues and work together to develop effective actions to address them. Working Group and Committee membership is voluntary, and representation is sought from a broad range of stakeholders. The committee and working groups are supported by the secretariat that is funded by the mining industry through NSW Minerals Council.



Water Accounting Framework



Cattle Grazing Studies



Detailed Air Quality Analysis

Key Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue Projects

Joint Environment Working Group

- Detailed investigations and analysis of both Upper Hunter air quality monitoring data and Hunter River water quality.
- Improved industry water accounting and stewardship
- Increased transparency of mine rehabilitation progress
- Grazing studies on rehabilitated mine land

Joint Economic and Social Development Working Group

- Facilitating better links between local businesses, local government, and industry partners through local supplier events
- Establishing a mining procurement information hub to better inform and equip local suppliers on preparing for tenders

Communications Working Group

- Implementing an annual School Mine Tours Program for more than 650 Upper Hunter primary and secondary students
- Overseeing stakeholder engagement and communications strategies
- Implementing Community Perceptions Surveys

The Dialogue is committed to representing the diverse voices and views of the Upper Hunter communities and is open to anyone who wants to play a part in addressing these issues.

We are actively seeking new community members, so if you're interested in getting involved, please contact the Dialogue for more information.

Email: info@miningdialogue.com.au

The table below summarises the current priority issues identified by Dialogue stakeholders.

ECONOMIC & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES
Skills shortages	Air Quality
Tourism and Regional Promotion	Renewables and Diesel Emissions Reductions
Diversifying Community Engagement	Residual Mine Voids
Housing Availability and Affordability	Water Security and Drought Proofing
Future Land Use and Availability	Innovative Tailings Solutions
Economic Diversification and Hunter Transition	Other Environmental Concerns



GET INVOLVED WITH THE DIALOGUE

The Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue is a collaboration between community, mining, business and government working together to address the cumulative impacts of mining and make the Upper Hunter a better place for all to live.

The Dialogue's participants represent a wide range of stakeholders who work together and, through our Working Groups and Committees, work together to investigate issues and implement solutions on environmental (e.g. air quality, rehabilitation and water quality and stewardship) and economic and social development issues.

The Dialogue is actively seeking new community members from across the Upper Hunter Valley. If you are interested in this opportunity, or to discover more about the Dialogue's purpose and vision and information about our Joint Working Groups, please email info@miningdialogue.com.au

Why join the Dialogue?

- ✓ Play an active role in contributing to improving the quality of life for those living in the Upper Hunter.
- ✓ Share your thoughts and ideas with representatives from the community and mining industry,
- ✓ Learn more about the Upper Hunter region, including projects and initiatives in the pipeline.
- ✓ Connect with new people in the Upper Hunter Community.



Please send an email to info@miningdialogue.com.au to join the Dialogue.

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