

# THE DIALOGUE

SUMMER 2024 - 2025



UPPER HUNTER MINING DIALOGUE NEWSLETTER

## 2024 COMMUNITY FORUM

WORKING TOGETHER  
FOR A STRONG FUTURE



The Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue's 2024 Community Forum held in Singleton, addressed pivotal topics including the regional economic outlook, the future of coal, post-mining land use, water stewardship, air quality, and mine rehabilitation.

*Also in this edition:*

- School mine tours wrap up for 2024
- JASC welcomes new Business Singleton representative
- Inviting young community members to join the Dialogue
- 2023 Water Accounting and Rehabilitation Reporting

# A WORD FROM THE DIALOGUE CHAIR



**Throughout 2024 the Dialogue continued to address the key issues and actions in their strategic work plan.**

The work plan was developed to respond to relevant themes and related issues arising from the 2022 Community Forum and the Dialogue Secretariat, working groups and Joint Advisory Steering Committee, have worked together throughout the year to effectively implement it.

In the past year, the Dialogue has continued to deliver its key environmental projects. In this issue we are highlighting our recently published 2023 results 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.

Our community engagement program also continued this year, including the School Mine Tours, with just under 600 students visiting mining operations, we participated in a range of community, business and youth networks and had a presence at Upper Hunter regional shows and mine community days.

These networks and events enable us to connect with the community and stay informed about relevant issues and/or concerns

The Dialogue ended the year with more than 120 people attending the 2024 Community Forum in Singleton on October 29.

The Forum is now held on a biennial basis and this year, the Forum focused on key themes of the regional economic outlook, the future of the local mining industry, post-mining land use and critical environmental impacts such as water stewardship, air quality and rehabilitation progress.

In this issue we provide a high-level overview of the topics discussed and the priority issues raised by community and wider stakeholders at the Forum.

In addition, the Dialogue is preparing a comprehensive report which will be shared with attendees and wider stakeholders in early 2025.

We thank everyone who participated in the Forum and made the day a successful and valuable event.

As 2024 draws to a close, we thank all the members of the Dialogue who give their time and energy to attend meetings and contribute in other ways and we wish everyone a safe and very happy holiday season.

**John Watson | Chair**  
*Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue*



# JASC WELCOMES NEW BUSINESS SINGLETON REPRESENTATIVE

**In December, the Dialogue welcomed Jono Moore to the Joint Advisory Steering Committee (JASC) as the new representative of Business Singleton.**

Jono was elected as the President of Business Singleton at their AGM in October. Jono replaces Danny Eather who has served on the JASC since late 2022. We thank Danny for his contribution to the Dialogue, to Business Singleton and the broader Singleton community.

Jono is a local Singleton resident and small business owner. Originally from Edgeworth, Jono spent 15 years in the mining industry in Queensland and the Hunter Valley before taking on the challenge of establishing a small business 14 years ago. He and his wife now own and operate two businesses based in Singleton.

As a member of the JASC, Jono hopes to contribute to creating greater awareness around the purpose and work of the Dialogue and to use his mining and small business experience to help break the divide between big and small businesses in the Upper Hunter.

Through the Dialogue and the JASC, Jono hopes to play a part in shaping a positive narrative and a sustainable future for the Upper Hunter.



**Pictured: Jono Moore, new representative of Business Singleton on the Joint Advisory Steering Committee (JASC)**

# WORKING TOGETHER AT THE 2024 COMMUNITY FORUM

**On Tuesday, 29 October 2024, over 120 community members, industry employees and government representatives attended the 2024 Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue Community Forum held at the Singleton Civic Centre.**

Since 2012, the Dialogue has held Community Forums as an opportunity for stakeholders to come together and hear about the Dialogue's key projects, learn more about the mining industry, and voice views on the impacts of mining in the Upper Hunter region.

The Community Forum focused on key themes of the regional economic outlook, the future of the local mining industry,

post-mining land use and critical environmental impacts such as water stewardship, air quality and rehabilitation progress.

Forum participants heard from a range of speakers, including the Hon. Emily Suvaal, who provided an update from the NSW Government. From Wood Mackenzie, Robin Griffin delivered an economic outlook for the Upper Hunter coal industry.



**Pictured: The Hon. Emily Suvaal addresses attendees**



**Pictured: Forum Facilitator Jess Rouse with speakers Hon. Emily Suvaal, Shagofta Ali and Di Sneddon**

BHP's Liz Watts provided an update on Mt Arthur's Pathway to 2030, and Shagofta Ali from the EPA discussed the impacts of the Climate Change Policy on the Hunter region.

Attendees were able to address critical issues as part of the question and answer session, and the panellists included Hon. Emily Suvaal, Shagofta Ali, and Di Sneddon.



## 2024 COMMUNITY FORUM RECAP

The Forum also provided an opportunity for community members to provide feedback on the issues and priorities for the Upper Hunter through a feedback session facilitated by Roberta Ryan at the University of Newcastle's Institute for Regional Futures.

The key issues from the day included post-mining land use, the regulatory framework, future land use opportunities, and environmental issues, including the region's rehabilitation progress and air quality.

A full report on the issues and ideas discussed at the Forum and the actions and/or initiatives proposed by the Dialogue to respond to them will be shared with attendees and broader stakeholders in early 2025.



Pictured: Shagofta Ali (EPA)

We thank everyone who participated in the 2024 Forum and made the day a successful and valuable event.

### KEY THEMES IDENTIFIED IN THE FORUM

#### ECONOMIC & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Economic transition and employment

Planning and governance

Collaborative planning & social cohesion

Infrastructure and public places

Healthcare and social services

#### ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Post-mining land use, including zoning

Air quality in the Upper Hunter

Climate risk and emissions

Rehabilitation

Water stewardship and security

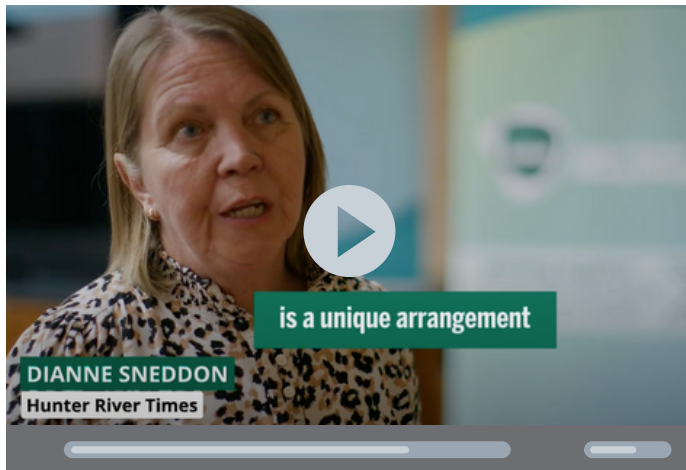
# WATCH KEY MOMENTS FROM THE FORUM



SCAN ME TO WATCH!

The Dialogue has released a video showcasing some of the highlights from the Forum, including insights from the Forum Facilitator, Jess Rouse and the Chair of the Dialogue, John Watson about priority issues for the region.

Keynote speaker, Robin Griffin from Wood Mackenzie provides key messages for an orderly and sustainable economic transition in the Upper Hunter.



Hear Roberta Ryan from the Institute for Regional Futures highlighting the process through which the Dialogue responds to the key issues and insights from the Forum.

Past Forum facilitator, and member of the Dialogue, Di Sneddon, emphasises the unique opportunity the Forum represents for diverse stakeholders to come together and have frank but respectful and productive conversations about the impacts and opportunities related to mining in the Upper Hunter.

## INVITING YOUNG COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO JOIN THE DIALOGUE



✓ LIVING IN OR FROM THE UPPER HUNTER?

✓ AGED BETWEEN 18-30?

We're inviting **expressions of interest** to be a founding member of the Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue's **Youth Advisory Group**.

Have your voice heard on ways to address the opportunities and impacts of mining in the region. **Help make a real difference.**

**The Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue (UHMD) is launching an exciting initiative to empower young voices and ensure their perspectives shape discussions around mining-related challenges and opportunities in the region.**

The Youth Advisory Group is a unique opportunity for young people aged 18-30 from Singleton, Muswellbrook, and the Upper Hunter Shire to actively contribute to shaping the community's future as a new part of the Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue.

If you, or someone you know is passionate about issues like liveability, environmental sustainability, employment and education, this group is an opportunity to help make a real difference.

Visit [miningdialogue.com.au](http://miningdialogue.com.au) to learn more, or email [info@miningdialogue.com.au](mailto:info@miningdialogue.com.au).



# FROM THE CLASSROOM TO THE COALFACE

## 2024 School Mine Tours wrap up

The Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue School Mine Tours program has completed its busy 2024 schedule, with just under 600 students from 18 schools in the Upper Hunter visiting 8 mining operations this year.



Pictured: Year 5 students from the Australian Christian College Singleton recently visited Glencore's Mt Owen Glendell Operations.

This year for the first time, parents and students from the Upper Hunter Homeschool Group participated in the program. Since its inception in 2018, more than 3,800 students have now undertaken a tour.

During the tours, students and teachers get to see the mining operation first-hand and speak directly with mine site staff. Students are provided an overview of the mining process and the associated impacts and what mining operations do to minimise these impacts on communities.



Pictured: Year 5 students from the Australian Christian College Singleton recently visited Glencore's Mt Owen Glendell Operations.

Mine site staff enjoy the enthusiasm of the students and the opportunity to share some of the things they've learned on their education and career journeys.

The educational materials provided through the tours, were designed in conjunction with local teachers and provide fact-based information which support the learning outcomes for the students.

The tours are free and are offered to all Year five and Year nine students from all the schools in the Upper Hunter region. Schools in the Singleton, Muswellbrook and Scone catchments participated again this year.



Pictured: Students from Year 11 at Singleton High School visited Wambo United JV on May 14, where they learned about the 'pit to port' operation.

The tours will continue in 2025, and the Dialogue extends its thanks to all the mining operations who have supported the school mine tour program this year.

# UPPER HUNTER REHABILITATION 2023



Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue

## Rehabilitation Principles & Commitments Analysis and Trends

### 2023 REHABILITATION SNAPSHOT

Since 2012, the Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue has been collecting and reporting on annual rehabilitation data from Upper Hunter mining operations.

This information is provided annually to the community to improve transparency and awareness about progressive rehabilitation and disturbance across the region.

Mining operators in the Upper Hunter region have agreed to a set of common rehabilitation principles and commitments to drive improvements.

These principles aim to decrease the periods of time that disturbed areas are left without temporary or final cover to minimise the impacts on the landscape and air quality.

In 2023, there was a change in how rehabilitation data was sourced. Previously, this has been obtained directly from industry, however in 2023, data was obtained from the Rehabilitation Annual Reports which are provided by industry to the Resources Regulator. This change in data source has delayed the results' publication.

In 2023, a further 962 hectares of land was newly rehabilitated, taking the total amount of land under rehabilitation to 14,367 hectares, equating to just over 35 percent of all land disturbed by mining in the Upper Hunter.

There was an increase in 2023 for newly disturbed land, 1,599 hectares, which is above the 5 year average. This increase in disturbance reflects the continued construction of the Maxwell Underground Mine and further development at Mount Pleasant.

The annual rehabilitation to disturbance ratio for 2023 was 0.66, meaning for every hectare of land disturbed, 0.66 hectares of rehabilitation was undertaken.

At the end of the reporting period, a total of 26,519 hectares of disturbed land is awaiting rehabilitation.

New rehabilitation

**962 ha**

Last Year (2022)

**529 ha**

Five-year average

**782 ha**

New disturbance

**1,599 ha**

Last Year (2022)

**676 ha**

Five-year average

**1,030 ha**

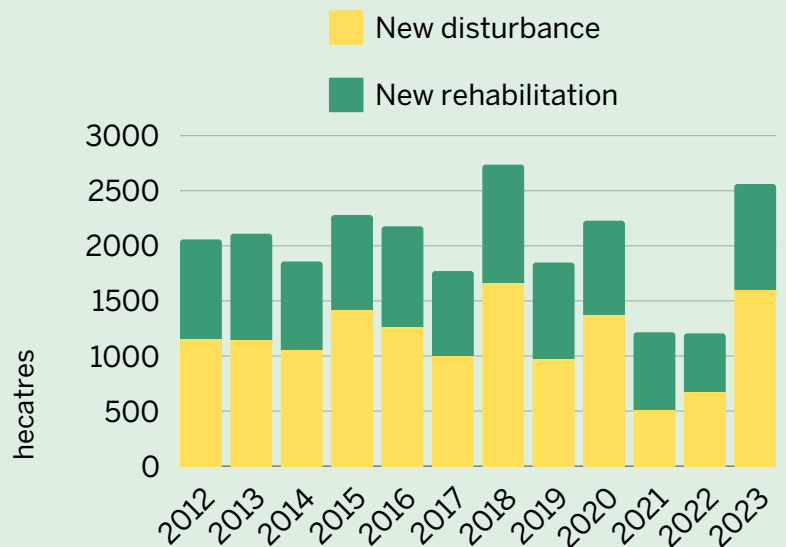


Figure 1: Comparison of annual new rehabilitation and disturbance

Total disturbed land under rehabilitation\*

**14,367 ha**

Total disturbed land awaiting rehabilitation\*

**26,519 ha**

\*at the end of the reporting period



**Over 35% of land disturbed by mining in the Upper Hunter is under active rehabilitation.**

For more information:

[miningdialogue.com.au](http://miningdialogue.com.au)



# UPPER HUNTER REHABILITATION 2023



Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue

## Rehabilitation Principles & Commitments

Rehabilitation Progress Table	Opening Figure	Five-Year Average	Last Five Years				
Rehabilitation	2012	2019-2023	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
A: Disturbed land awaiting rehabilitation - Start amount (ha)	17,830	23,511	22,276	22,726	23,245	23,245	25,882
B: Total land newly disturbed within the reporting period (ha)	1,163	1,030	979	1,380	514	676	1,599
C: Total land newly rehabilitated within the reporting period (ha)	782	804	869	848	701	529	962
D: Disturbed land awaiting rehabilitation - End amount (ha) (D=A+B-C)	18,098	23,786	22,518	23,259	23,058	23,572	26,519
E: Total land under rehabilitation at all operations (ha)	8,791	14,362	13,470	14,242	14,746	14,987	14,367
F: Annual ratio of rehabilitation to disturbance (C:B)	0.77	0.86	0.89	0.61	1.36	0.78	0.66
G: Overall proportion of disturbed land rehabilitated	32.7%	37.7%	37.4%	37.9%	39.0%	38.9%	35.1%
Other Managed Land	2012	2019-2023	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Estimate of total biodiversity offset land (ha)	10,973	43,342	41,803	43,689	41,034	44,109	46,073
Estimate of total managed agricultural land (ha)	N/A	55,243	59,209	59,160	52,788	51,404	53,655
Estimate of total buffer land (ha)	N/A	45,063	47,063	47,179	48,175	44,976	43,550

For Contextual Information to support the Rehabilitation Progress Table please visit:

[miningdialogue.com.au](https://miningdialogue.com.au)

Thanks to the NSW Resources Regulator and all Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue industry members (Bengalla Mining Company, BHP, The Bloomfield Group, Glencore, MACH Energy Mount Pleasant Operation, Malabar Resources, Muswellbrook Coal Company, Peabody Energy, and Yancoal) for supplying rehabilitation and disturbance data for this project.

# UPPER HUNTER WATER BALANCE 2023



Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue

## Mining's water use

The Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue assessed water use by the mining industry in the Upper Hunter in 2023. Using a common accounting framework, mining companies have reported their water inflows and outflows from operations. This has helped them to manage their water use and embark on water saving and reuse opportunities.



**MORE THAN 5.7x**

as much water evaporated from the Hunter River System storage dams as was extracted from the Hunter River System by mining companies

The mining industry used **JUST 2.7%** of water in the Upper Hunter River System

**9%**

of mine water came from rivers and alluvial aquifers

**32%**

of mine water was sourced from onsite rainfall and runoff

**34%**

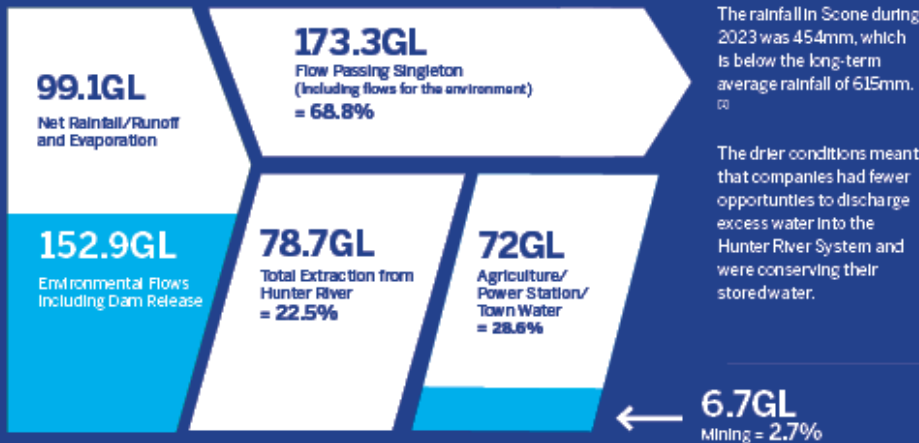
of water was sourced from deep aquifers that are of limited use to other water users due to their high salinity

The mining industry **REUSED 40%** of its water onsite

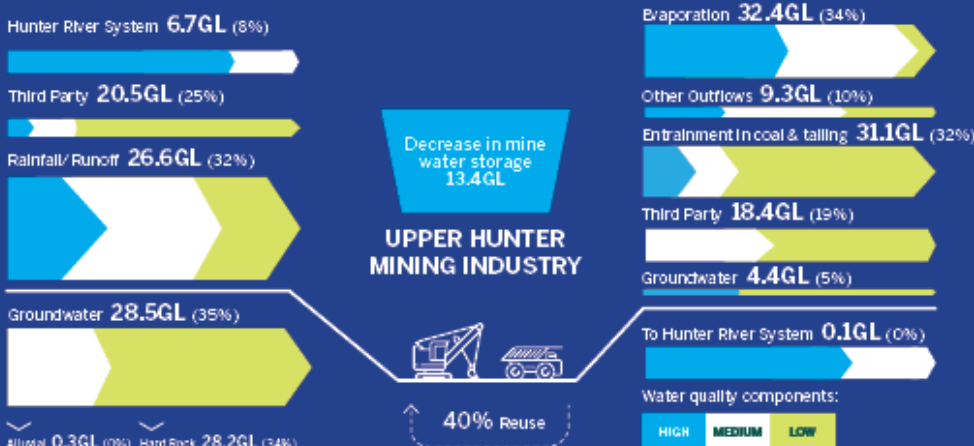
**0.1%**

of mine water was discharged into the Hunter River

## Hunter River System Extraction



## Mining Industry Water Use Balance



The Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue developed this resource using the best available information, supplied by industry data. Since water accounting is a complex task that relies on estimates and computer models, there are corresponding limits to the accuracy of the information. Sources: Bureau of Meteorology; DPIWater; NSW Minerals Council data. Notes: [1] The source for contextual rainfall data was updated in 2019 due to the closure of the Scone SCS station. Scone Airport AWS was selected due to its nearby location, however long-term data for this site is limited to 1994 onwards.

For more information:  
[miningdialogue.com.au](http://miningdialogue.com.au)



# UPPER HUNTER WATER BALANCE 2023



Upper Hunter  
Mining Dialogue


## Summary of Key Findings

In the 2023 water year, the Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue evaluated water use within the mining industry in the Upper Hunter region.

Since 2014, mines have used a standardised accounting framework to report water inflows and outflows. This has enabled the mining sector to better manage water usage and explore opportunities for conservation and reuse.

 **2023 was a drier-than-average year, allowing 252 gigalitres (or 252,000 megalitres) to enter the river system in the Upper Hunter.**

 **69% (or 173 gigalitres) of the water stayed in the river.**

 **Farmers, residents and businesses extracted around 29% (or 72.0 gigalitres) of the water in the system.**


 **Mining used 2.7% (or 6.7 gigalitres) of the water in the system.**

 **15% (or 38.0 gigalitres) of the water evaporated from the Hunter River System storage dams.**

 **32% (or 26.6 gigalitres) of the water inflow to mines was sourced from onsite rainfall and runoff.**

 **34% (or 28.2 gigalitres) of the water inflow to mines was sourced from deep aquifers that are of limited use to other water users due to their high salinity.**

 **The mining industry reused 40% of its water onsite.**

 **0.1% (or 0.1 gigalitres) of the water outflow from mines was discharged into the Hunter River. The drier conditions meant there were fewer opportunities to discharge.**

For more information and analysis see:

[miningdialogue.com.au](https://miningdialogue.com.au)



# 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](mailto: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](mailto:info@miningdialogue.com.au) to join the Dialogue.

## LET'S CONNECT!

 [facebook.com/UpperHunterMiningDialogue](https://facebook.com/UpperHunterMiningDialogue)

 [linkedin.com/company/upper-hunter-mining-dialogue](https://linkedin.com/company/upper-hunter-mining-dialogue)

 [miningdialogue.com.au](https://miningdialogue.com.au)