

# NEXT STEPS

## UPPER HUNTER MINING DIALOGUE



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## 1 About the Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue

The Upper Hunter coal industry recognises that as it has grown, it has brought both benefits and impacts. In response, the region's coal producers – Anglo American, Ashton Coal Operations, BHP Billiton Mt Arthur Coal, Bloomfield Collieries, Coal & Allied, Muswellbrook Coal, Peabody Energy Australia, Vale Australia, and Xstrata Coal – commenced the Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue to get a better understanding of the community's concerns and to work together to address the challenges identified in a recent stakeholder survey.

The first phase of the Dialogue was a survey of many of the stakeholder groups from the area. Stakeholders who participated in the survey including community members of mine community consultative committees, environmental interest groups, community and residents groups, federal, state and local government representatives, industry and business representatives, coal mining companies and individual mine operators and staff.

Through information evenings in Singleton, Muswellbrook and Denman we've been able to listen to the community's concerns about mining. The issues of concern that come through very strongly from both the survey and comments made by the information evening participants fall into five broad topic categories: water; social impacts; rehabilitation and land management; land use conflicts; and dust, air quality and health. These five topics were explored at the recent stakeholder workshop.

## 2 The Stakeholder Workshop

The NSW Minerals Council hosted a workshop in Singleton on 1 July 2011 to start generating ideas for actions that would begin addressing the community's concerns about mining in the Upper Hunter. The 69 participants included many of the region's community and environment groups, representatives of business and agriculture, the nine coal producers, as well as representatives of local government and state government agencies.

A *Stakeholder Workshop Report* has been prepared that sets out the format of the workshop and all of the ideas from the day. The *Stakeholder Workshop Report* has been reviewed by three of the participating community members who participated in the workshop. You can find the report at <http://www.nswmin.com.au/uhmd.aspx>.

## 3 Top ten ideas generated at the workshop and the next steps

This section sets out the top ten ideas as ranked by the workshop participants and the next steps to progress the actions in relation to those ideas. We have also provided background for each idea to assist readers who weren't at the workshop.

We understand that the community wants to see direct action on the issues that concern them. Those actions need to be the right ones and need to be developed along with the community. Many of the top ten ideas from the workshop deal with the 'big picture' including changes to policy and the development of new policy, plans and regulation. The development of these ideas into concrete actions will require the input of multiple stakeholders and the community and further dialogue will be a vital part of ensuring the community's objectives are considered.

Many of the ideas that fell outside the top ten are less complex but are still important and we'll work together with the community to develop actions on these ideas.



<b>Idea 1</b>	<b>Synoptic Plan: Urgent development of a new synoptic plan: strong community and industry input - include land class - ensure plan is a living document.</b>
<b>Votes</b>	<b>49</b>

### Actions suggested by the Workshop

The Synoptic Plan should be a tool under the strategic regional land use plans.

- The Synoptic Plan should be revised and that should be pursued by:
  - Stakeholder and industry meetings to discuss who should lead/fund its place in the strategic regional land use plan
  - Advocacy to government.
- Revise the 1999 Synoptic Plan:
  - This should be expedited
  - Use the existing 1999 document, 'don't reinvent'
  - Consider strategic planning outcomes
  - Identify issues not already identified in the 1999 Plan
  - The development of the synoptic plan should be led by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure and should be developed alongside the Strategic Regional Land Use Plan
  - The deadline for the completion of the synoptic plan is 31 December 2012 or when the land use plan is completed, whichever comes first
  - Industry should adhere to recommendations of the synoptic plan
  - Develop a consolidated map of all mines in the Hunter Valley and what industry is doing (rehabilitation, disturbance, offsets etc.) and future approved plans. The Rehabilitation and Land Management Working Group will consider.



### Background

There was wide support amongst participants at the stakeholder workshop including the mining industry, for a revised or new synoptic plan. Different groups of stakeholders had different ideas on how the plan should be developed.

The purpose of a synoptic plan is to provide an overarching strategy for mine rehabilitation in the Upper Hunter. The plan would help ensure that mines are rehabilitated to land uses that meet the needs of the region and are integrated with the region's landscape, whether that is agriculture, biodiversity, forestry, housing development or other land uses. Without a plan there is a risk that different operations will rehabilitate their mines in a way that may not be well integrated. A synoptic plan was originally prepared by the then NSW Department of Mineral Resources in 1999, but has not been updated since.

The NSW Government is currently developing a Strategic Regional Land Use Plan for the Upper Hunter (SRLUP), which will outline an overarching strategy for all land uses in the region. The participants at the workshop felt that the synoptic plan should be a tool that sits under the SRLUP for the area. For this reason, the development of the synoptic plan needs to be considered alongside the development of the SRLUP for the region.

### Next Steps

The NSW Minerals Council will organise a Land Use Planning Workshop with interested stakeholders, industry, the Department of Planning and Infrastructure and the Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Services and Infrastructure to begin the development of a new synoptic plan.

The Land Use Planning Workshop will start to consider the role of the synoptic plan and how it should be developed, including:

- How the synoptic plan fits with the strategic regional land use plan (SRLUP) the Government is preparing for the region. The Hunter Valley SRLUP is due to be completed by the end of 2011.

- Who should be responsible for the plan?
- What are the best ways to involve the community in the development of the plan?
- What were the problems/ gaps in the 1999 plan and how can these be addressed?
- How the development of the synoptic plan will be funded
- How the plan can be a 'live' document.

The NSW Minerals Council aims to hold the Land Use Planning Workshop during September/October 2011.



<b>Idea 2</b>	<b>Water study for the Hunter Valley to understand aquifers and surface water.</b>
<b>Votes</b>	28

### Action suggested by the Workshop

NSW Minerals Council to facilitate a Working Group consisting of the Office of Water (regional), Catchment Management Authority (CMA), Water Users' Association, industry and State Water to collate existing information and identify the gaps to produce a hydrological map for the whole Hunter Catchment. The first meeting of the Work Group will be on 1 September 2011.

### Background

There is a large amount of existing data on water resources in the Hunter Valley. Before deciding on the scope of any further water studies, it is important to understand what data is already available, identify information gaps and determine what benefits further work would provide.

<b>Next steps</b>
<p>To begin the process of answering these questions, the NSW Minerals Council will coordinate a Water Forum and will encourage the participation of stakeholders including the NSW Office of Water, Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority, Hunter Water Users' Association, the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, the mining industry and the community.</p> <p>An agenda for the Water Forum could potentially include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An outline of existing data in the Hunter region</li> <li>▪ Opportunities for stakeholders to present information</li> <li>▪ Consideration of independent water experts</li> <li>▪ Aquifer Interference Policy.</li> </ul> <p>In order to allow sufficient time for stakeholders to prepare, and for a constructive agenda to be formulated, a more realistic date for this Forum would be in November 2011.</p>



<b>Idea 3</b>	<b>Independent and transparent water assessment of mining projects (funding and training for more water experts who can work independently of mining companies).</b>
<b>Votes</b>	<b>26</b>

### Action suggested by the Workshop

Lobby Government for independent assessment of Environmental Impacts Assessments (EIAs). Government to establish a panel of independent hydrologists to peer review each mine's water assessments. NSW Minerals Council to endorse.

### Background

Independent peer review of water studies is an important part of the assessment process for projects where water is a significant issue.

The NSW Office of Water reviews all water assessments submitted by mine proponents. In addition, independent experts peer review water studies where the Government believes this is warranted. This is sometimes done by the Planning Assessment Commission and sometimes by experts commissioned by the Government. The industry pays application fees to the Government that help cover the cost of these reviews.

There are a number of practical issues that need to be investigated. These include:

- How the panel would work with the existing arrangements for independent reviews
- Which experts would sit on the panel
- Whether the panel would be full time or part time
- Whether the panel would be restricted from undertaking additional work.

The catchment-wide Water Study proposed in Idea 2, and independent assessments of the specific impacts on water of a particular project, are two completely different concepts.

### Next steps

The NSW Minerals Council plans to discuss this issue at the Water Forum planned for later in 2011 (refer to Idea 2).



<b>Idea 4</b>	<b>2005 Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Stream/Aquifer Guideline<sup>1</sup> – Implement the aquifer standards outlined in the Guideline (150m from edge of alluvium).</b>
<b>Votes</b>	<b>25</b>

### Action suggested by the Workshop

Set the 2005 Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Stream/Aquifer Guideline as the minimum requirement for buffer zone between mining and edge of streams, rivers and alluviums.

### Background

The NSW Government is currently preparing an Aquifer Interference Policy that will apply throughout the State. The policy is being developed in consultation with the Government's Stakeholder Reference Group, which includes the NSW Farmers Association, Total Environment Centre, Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU), NSW Aboriginal Land Council, Association of NSW Mining Related Councils, Australian Petroleum Production & Exploration Association (APPEA), Nature Conservation Council, NSW Irrigators Council, Hunter Valley Wine Industry Association, Thoroughbred Breeders of the Hunter Valley and the NSW Minerals Council.

The Aquifer Interference Policy will outline the rules that mining projects, and other types of development, will be assessed against when they have the potential to impact on aquifers. The assessment process will determine whether the potential impacts are acceptable and the most appropriate management measures that should be adopted. Whether an impact on an aquifer is acceptable or not depends on the significance of the impact and the benefits that come from the project.

Setting a generic buffer zone around alluvial aquifers is not an appropriate management measure. Aquifers don't all have the same characteristics or value, so standard controls like generic buffer zones are inappropriate. The right management measures can only be determined on a case by case basis after considering the specifics of the aquifer, the potential impacts, and the benefits generated by the project. Where a buffer zone is an appropriate management measure, the size of the buffer needs to be determined based on detailed, evidence based assessments, which can only be undertaken when a specific proposal is put forward.



### Next steps

The NSW Minerals Council will continue to participate in the government process already underway to develop an Aquifer Interference Policy, to avoid duplicating work.

The NSW Minerals Council will also endeavour to have the NSW Office of Water present on the Aquifer Interference Policy at the proposed Water Forum (refer to Idea 2).

<sup>1</sup> This Guideline was referred to by workshop participants as "DIPNR 2005"

<b>Idea 5</b>	<b>Health Risk Assessments to go into Director General requirements, looking particularly at long term health issues as well as short term, intense exposure. Assessment to be done at exploration stage.</b>
<b>Votes</b>	<b>24</b>

### Action suggested by the Workshop

Develop guidelines for Health Risk Assessment in consultation/engagement with key stakeholders, including community and health professionals, that can be incorporated by Office of Minerals and Energy (DTIRIS) and Department of Planning and Infrastructure in future consents/licences/approvals/exploration.

### Background

Health Risk Assessments are already undertaken where they are required by the Director General of Department of Planning and Infrastructure, in consultation with NSW Health, as part of the project approval process. It is not practical for such assessments to be completed at the exploration stage, because the full scope of a final project is not known at this point. Specific details of the project, which are developed after exploration, are needed in order to conduct a robust assessment of potential health risks.

### Next steps

The NSW Minerals Council will work with NSW Health to develop a Guideline for the preparation of Health Risk Assessments.





<b>Idea 6</b>	<b>Strategic Land Use Plan linked to CMA management plan and local government area and used to guide ability to explore.</b>
<b>Votes</b>	<b>24</b>

### Actions suggested by the Workshop

- Nominate people at the workshop to organise meetings between the mining industry and community to establish expectations that need to be incorporated into the Strategic Regional Land Use Plan
- Nominate a community and mining representative to draft a letter stating that we have expectations that need to be included in order to put NSW Government on notice
- Stakeholders on the Ministerial Reference Group, (including mining) will advocate for a full community consultation process to be carried out, including meetings with communities
- Stakeholders and industry to meet to define and agree on areas where mining shouldn't occur and advocate this to government (see Idea 9).

### Background

The NSW Government is in the process of preparing a strategic regional land use plan for the Hunter Valley. The Government has set up a Stakeholder Reference Group (this was referred to as a "Ministerial Reference Group" at the workshop) to advise it with regard to the plans.

### Next steps

Integration of the land use plan with other planning instruments, particularly at a local level will be addressed through the land use planning workshop (see Idea 1). The workshop will involve interested stakeholders, industry, the Department of Planning and Infrastructure and the Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services.

The agenda of the workshop will include:

- Discussion of how the strategic land use plan for the Hunter Valley will fit with other planning instruments and the proposed synoptic plan
- An opportunity for participants to discuss their expectations for the strategic land use plan for the Hunter Valley. In the event that common expectations can be agreed, the workshop can agree a way of formally advising the Government.

The NSW Minerals Council has written to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure advising that the industry supports a full community consultation process as part of the development of each strategic regional land use plan. This letter has been provided to each of the other groups represented on the Stakeholder Reference Group and we have asked them to support this request.



<b>Idea 7</b>	<b>Hunter Communities Network four suggestions:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cover all coal trains through to the Port of Newcastle</li> <li>2. Use improved and uniform blasting product to eliminate toxic orange brown emissions</li> <li>3. Support a comprehensive regional study on the impacts of current operations on surface and groundwater systems in the Hunter</li> <li>4. Rehabilitate mine sites at the same rate of disturbance by mining.</li> </ol>
<b>Votes</b>	<b>22</b>

### Action suggested by the Workshop

The group covering Idea 7 at the workshop ran out of time to develop actions for these ideas. The industry has set out next steps to progress each of these ideas below.

### Background

#### *Covering of coal trains*

While some detailed studies have been carried out in other jurisdictions, there is at present little data on coal train dust in NSW. Comprehensive research specific to NSW needs to be undertaken before any form of dust suppression is considered. Any method would need to be tested to ensure that it is the most efficient, effective method.

#### *Blast fumes*

Blast fumes are causing increasing concern in the Hunter. Better information is required with regard to the impacts of blast fumes and how these are managed and minimised.

#### *Impacts of mining on regional water resources*

There is a large amount of existing data on water resources in the Hunter Valley. Before deciding on the scope of any further water studies, it is important to understand what data is already available, identify information gaps and determine what benefits further work would provide.

#### *Mine rehabilitation*

The industry wants to improve its performance on rehabilitation. This includes better coordination of rehabilitation and giving the community more certainty by providing information about what we are doing and our plans for the future.

Modern mine rehabilitation is progressive and occurs throughout the life of the mine. During the operation of a mine there will be times when there is less land available for rehabilitation than there is disturbed land. However there will also be times, particularly towards the end of the project when the area of land being rehabilitated will exceed the land being disturbed. Once land is available for rehabilitation, rehabilitation should commence as soon as possible.



### Next steps

#### *Coal Trains*

To provide a better understanding of the impacts of coal train dust, the NSW Minerals Council will meet with the Australian Rail and Track Corporation, Pacific National, Queensland Rail and Xstrata (who operate their own coal trains) to discuss research and monitoring possibilities. Coal train dust will also be discussed at an air quality Information Session (further information in Section 4.1).

#### *Blast fumes*

There is significant work underway in relation to blast fumes and plumes:

- The NSW Minerals Council is preparing a fact sheet on Blast Fume Management for release in September 2011
- Several Australian Coal Association Research Program projects are underway investigating the composition and effects of blast fumes, due to be complete in 2011/2012
- The NSW Minerals Council is collaborating with NSW Health and the Department of Planning and Infrastructure to further investigate blast fumes to determine what further research is required and how management practices may be improved.

NSWMC will consider the outcomes of this work and consult with industry, government and the community on how blast fumes can be minimised.

*Impacts of mining on regional water resources*

As outlined at Idea 2, the NSW Minerals Council will coordinate a Water Forum and will encourage the participation of stakeholders including the NSW Office of Water, Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority, Hunter Water Users' Association, the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, the mining industry and the community.

*Mine rehabilitation*

The industry commits to commencing rehabilitation as soon as is practicable after land becoming available for rehabilitation.



<b>Idea 8</b>	<b>Regionally significant infrastructure fast tracked by government – more advocacy by the NSW Minerals Council, local government and Regional Development Australia to get funding.</b>
<b>Votes</b>	<b>21</b>

### Actions suggested by the Workshop

- Fast-track Muswellbrook bypass (completion date of 2019).
- Scone overpass. The planning of the overpass has been allocated funding. There needs to be a whole-of-community approach to lobby to get overpass completed.
- Singleton bypass study to start.
- Singleton 'Hole in Wall' study/finish. Needs planning and design and State Government money.

### Background

A number of State and Federal funds could and should contribute to infrastructure in the Hunter region.

Federal funds include:

- The \$6 billion Regional Infrastructure Fund, from revenues raised by the Mineral Resources Rent Tax (MRRT)
- The \$1 billion Regional Development Australia fund, half of this funding depends on the MRRT.

NSW funds include:

- The \$350 million Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund for transport, health and water infrastructure
- 'Restart NSW', a \$5 billion fund for a broad range of infrastructure projects. Thirty per cent of the fund is to be quarantined for regional NSW
- 'Resources for the Regions', through which the NSW Government will initially provide \$160 million over four years to infrastructure in mining regions.

In addition to government, various entities have responsibility for coordinating infrastructure development in the region. These include Regional Development Australia – Hunter, the Board of the new Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund, and the new statutory body Infrastructure NSW.

The region can improve its access to funding by demonstrating that its priority projects have both sound business cases and broad stakeholder support.

### Next steps

The industry does not have the capacity to determine which infrastructure projects in the Hunter should be given priority, nor does it want to duplicate work being done by other bodies such as Regional Development Australia - Hunter.

However, the NSW Minerals Council can contribute to regional infrastructure by:

- Connecting stakeholders and sharing information
- Advocating to government and other entities on behalf of the region
- Helping to coordinate advocacy efforts.

The NSW Minerals Council aims to bring together local stakeholders and infrastructure planning organisations to develop effective advocacy strategies to increase infrastructure funding for the region.



<b>Idea 9</b>	<b>Industry with local community to meet and advocate to government for mining free zones.</b>
<b>Votes</b>	<b>18</b>

### Action suggested by the Workshop

Stakeholders and industry to meet to define and agree on areas where mining shouldn't occur and advocate this to government.

### Background

Decision making about where mining should and shouldn't occur is best undertaken by the NSW Government, which has the ability to assess competing interests and make decisions in the best interests of the State.

The industry believes that land use decisions need to be made through a combination of strategic land use planning and the assessment of individual project proposals. Strategic land use plans should establish principles, performance measures or benchmarks to protect important values in a region. The detailed assessments of individual proposals should then determine whether these outcomes can be achieved.

The Hunter Valley strategic land use plan is being developed by the NSW Government with the input of stakeholders including the NSW Farmers Association, the Total Environment Centre, the Thoroughbred Breeders Association, the NSW Irrigators' Council and the NSW Minerals Council.

There will be cases where the effects of mining on the environment, the community or other industries will outweigh the benefits of mining. However, these decisions can only be made after a thorough assessment of an individual proposal.



### Next steps

This issue is best addressed by the NSW Government through the strategic regional land use planning process, which has the input of stakeholders, including mining, through the Stakeholder Reference Group and consultation on the draft plan. As the primary objective of the process will be to solve issues of land use conflict, it is important that the Dialogue does not duplicate the work of the Government.

<b>Idea 10</b>	<b>Local employment must be the focus for contractors and mining companies. There needs to be a focus on training local people for jobs and apprenticeships for local people.</b>
<b>Votes</b>	<b>18</b>

### **Actions suggested by the Workshop**

- Regional people to get jobs
- Regional people to get training
- Job-ready programs developed by mines/TAFE/local training companies (2012)
- Encourage all companies to achieve target of 5% local Indigenous employment
- Investigate opportunity of establishing a mining university in the Upper Hunter
- Increase apprenticeships and training by mines, power industry and other large industry.

### **Background**

Many mining companies have developed programs to increase local training and employment, but these actions are not generally co-ordinated across the industry. An industry-wide overview of local training and employment programs does not yet exist. Opportunities to access such programs may be lost because of this.

### **Next steps**

The NSW Minerals Council will review company information on existing apprenticeship, training and employment programs, and consult local education providers, to gain an accurate picture of the current local demand for and provision of training and employment opportunities. We will make this analysis public and seek feedback from the community during October/ November 2011.

The industry's Community Working Group will then identify any gaps and explore opportunities for improvement, in consultation with interested stakeholders.



## 4 Other ideas

The workshop generated over 85 ideas for addressing the main topics of concern: water; land use; rehabilitation and land management; social impacts and health; and dust and air quality.

All of the 85 ideas are recorded in the *Stakeholder Workshop Report*, which has been published on the NSW Minerals Council website. The top ten ideas will be the priority for the Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue. The industry has also committed to looking at how the other ideas can be advanced at the same time as the top ten ideas. Proposed next steps in relation to a number of these ideas are set out below and will be further developed along with stakeholders.

The three community information evenings held in Singleton, Muswellbrook and Denman have also produced more than 40 ideas for consideration. The feedback from the information evenings can be found on the NSWMC website, <http://www.nswmin.com.au/uhamd.aspx>, under *Community Information Evenings - Feedback*. We will also be working to develop as many of the community's ideas as possible, noting that there is considerable overlap with the ideas generated at the workshop.

### 4.1 Dust, air quality and health ideas

The workshop generated another 20 ideas - aside from those in the top ten - in relation to dust and air quality. Generally, these ideas were focused on:

- Increased air quality and speciation monitoring and research
- Better engagement between government and community
- Greater industry contribution to research
- Expansion of the Upper Hunter Air Quality Monitoring Network.

Many of these ideas are similar and if there had been time to add them up at the workshop, some of these ideas would have made it into the top ten. Accordingly, action also needs to be taken on these ideas.

Given the well-known concerns about dust and air quality, the industry and the NSW Government are already developing projects to address some of these issues. For example, NSW Health is beginning PM<sub>1</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> monitoring in the Upper Hunter as well as undertaking research into speciation.

#### Next Steps

The NSW Minerals Council will arrange an information session on air quality and health, where experts from NSW Health and the Office of Environment and Heritage will be invited to present on a range of issues of interest to the community.

This will be an opportunity for interested stakeholders to discuss their concerns and learn more about the range of projects and research currently underway in the Upper Hunter region.

Topics for discussion could include:

- PM<sub>2.5</sub>, PM<sub>1</sub> and speciation monitoring
- Health risk assessments
- Upper Hunter Air Quality Monitoring Network
- Industry research and initiatives.

The industry will hold the Information Session in late September/early October 2011.



## 4.2 Rehabilitation and land management and land use ideas

### Better information about rehabilitation

A clear theme in rehabilitation-related ideas was the need for more information and better information about rehabilitation. The industry acknowledges that this is an area where we can improve current practice. One suggestion made at the workshop was for tours of rehabilitated areas for the public.

#### Next Steps

The industry will organise tours of mine rehabilitation for interested stakeholder representatives and community members.

Participants will get a firsthand look at rehabilitated mine areas, an overview of the science behind mine rehabilitation and opportunities to see different stages and types of rehabilitation, such as agriculture and biodiversity.

Details of the tours are being developed.

### Weed Control

There were several ideas about the control of weeds in the region. The industry wants to support control of weeds in the region.

#### Next Steps

The industry will contact stakeholders groups with an interest in weed control to consider options for a weed control project in the region that will benefit the community.

### Ideas that related to land use planning or the synoptic plan

A number of the ideas that didn't make it into the top ten were about land use and what happens to land after mining has finished. Many of the ideas fit within the strategic regional land use planning process or the synoptic plan. The Land Use Planning Workshop (see Ideas 1 & 6) provides a good opportunity to consider how these related ideas can be progressed.

#### Next Steps

These ideas will be considered and developed further at the Land Use Planning Workshop.

## 4.3 Social impact ideas

In addition to the top ten ideas relating to social impacts, the industry's Community Working Group will examine the other 16 social impacts ideas generated at the Stakeholder Workshop. Some of these ideas overlap with the top ten. For example, the idea that the industry should advocate for public funding for health infrastructure is similar to the idea that industry should work with stakeholders to advocate for funding of infrastructure projects (Idea 8). Other ideas covered issues such as accommodation shortages and prices, the impact of shift work on families and the community, preservation of Aboriginal and European heritage and provision of transport and transport infrastructure.

#### Next Steps

Both BHP Billiton Mt Arthur and Vale Integra Australia Operations have recently carried out social research in the Hunter Valley.





These projects are expected to be completed in the next few months, and will inform the industry's approach to tackling the issues raised by stakeholders.

#### 4.4 Water ideas

Numerous ideas relating to water were generated at the Stakeholder Workshop, which covered a range of issues such as river diversion, audits of existing operations, community review of environmental assessments and participation in the National Water Initiative. Three of the ideas that formed the top ten were also water-related.

Some of those ideas that sit outside the top ten will be addressed through the proposed community Water Forum. Others need to be looked into in more detail to determine the best way to move forward on each of the ideas.

##### Next Steps

These ideas will be considered and developed further at the Water Forum to be held later in 2011 (refer to Idea 2), and in consultation with the community and industry.



## 5 Conclusion

The Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue is a long term commitment by the mining industry to listen to, and better address, the concerns of the community about the cumulative impacts of mining. The issues before us are complex, but continuing participation of stakeholders, the community and the industry in the Dialogue provides an opportunity to address those issues in a way that considers the community's objectives.

The ideas generated at the stakeholder workshop are a good start. Translating these ideas into actions will take time and the industry is aware that the real work is now ahead of us. The region's coal producers know they must do things differently in the future to minimise the cumulative impacts of mining on the community and the environment in the Hunter Valley. The input from the community is invaluable.

We thank the people who have already given up their time and shared their ideas. We look forward to continuing the Dialogue and working with the community to put these plans into action.

