

STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP REPORT

UPPER HUNTER MINING DIALOGUE



NEW SOUTH WALES
MINERALS COUNCIL LTD
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**Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue
Stakeholder Workshop Report**

Singleton, Friday 1 July 2011

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1 Workshop goals and objectives

A stakeholder workshop was held from 9.00am to 1.00pm on 1 July 2011 at the Civic Centre in Singleton, NSW to bring together stakeholders in the Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue.

The dialogue was initiated by the coal producers of the Upper Hunter Valley, acting through the NSW Minerals Council (NSWMC), in the second half of 2010, in response to rising community concerns about the cumulative impacts of coal mining in the area. The dialogue began with a survey that identified the major concerns of the various stakeholders in the Upper Hunter Region. The report of the research results was published in April 2011 and has been widely circulated to stakeholders. Community information nights were held in May in Singleton, in June in Muswellbrook, and in July in Denman, to share the results.

The 1 July workshop was planned to bring together stakeholders to identify preferred actions to be taken on agreed priority issues and obtain a clear future direction for the dialogue.

Invitations to participate in the workshop were sent to stakeholders who were invited to participate in the stakeholder research for the dialogue and to others, who have expressed an interest in participating. A list of the organisations represented can be found at the Appendix (p.11).



2 What happened on the day

The workshop was designed in two parts. In the first part, a series of round table discussions was held in which participants were asked to consider one of the major themes to emerge in the dialogue so far:

- Dust, air quality, noise and health
- Rehabilitation and land management
- Social impacts
- Land use
- Water.

Eight discussion tables were set up, with one table each on the themes of water and land use and two tables on each of the other themes.

Three rounds of 25 minutes each of discussion on the table theme provided an opportunity for everyone to participate in three thematic conversations.

The question participants were asked to consider at each discussion was: Thinking about the issue on our table, what could we start together today that could make the most difference to the future of this issue?

A table host was appointed by each table to facilitate discussion. Volunteers for the role of table host were requested and the following people played these roles:

Land use	Claire Doherty, NSWMC
Water	David Frith, NSWMC
Social impacts	Mike Kelly, Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce
Social impacts	Kathie Heyman, Regional Development Australia - Hunter
Dust, air quality, noise and health	Philippe Porignaux, NSW Health and Hunter New England Population Health
Dust, air quality, noise and health	Peter Forbes, Anglo American
Rehabilitation and land management	Sarah Withell, BHP Billiton Mt Arthur Coal
Rehabilitation and land management	Wayne Bedgood, Hunter Thoroughbred Breeders Association
Rehabilitation and land management	Julie McNaughton, BHP Billiton Mt Arthur Coal

At the outset of each discussion, a representative of the mining industry outlined some of the ideas that the industry has had so far about how to tackle some of the issues identified in the research. Additional ideas were generated through the group discussions.

At the end of these discussions the table hosts compiled posters listing all the ideas generated at their tables and placed them on pin boards for everyone to view during morning tea. All of the ideas generated are set out in Section 3 below. The ideas have been transcribed from the posters, with some small edits made to assist the reader, such as including full names instead of acronyms, including the official names of various studies and government agencies, and extending shorthand terms.

Each participant in the workshop indicated their priorities for ideas to develop further by placing a blue dot sticker next to up to ten of their most-preferred ideas. Mining companies each had one set of ten “dots” for voting. All other participants had a set of “10 dots” for each person.

After morning tea the ten top-voted ideas were further discussed. The questions for discussion were:

- What specific action needs to be taken to progress this idea right now?
- Who needs to be involved?

The results of this discussion appear in Section 4. It is important to note that all of the ideas generated are being considered for action. The workshop format aimed to add more detail to those ideas that were the most highly prioritised by attendees. Some of the ideas are similar. NSWMC will be looking at the list to identify similar ideas and will also work to develop these ideas together with stakeholders.

A statement was made to the meeting from Wybong Action Group emphasising the need for the mining industry to win back the trust of the community.

This report was prepared by the workshop facilitators, the Australian Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility, from the posters written by the groups at the Stakeholder Workshop. Three community participants from the workshop and the NSW Minerals Council have reviewed the report.



3 Ideas for action

The following ideas for action were suggested in response to the question: “What could we start together today that could make the most difference to the future of this issue?”

From these ideas, a ‘top-10 list’ was voted on:

Idea for action	Votes
Synoptic Plan: Urgent development of a new synoptic plan: strong community and industry input - include land class - ensure plan is a living document.	49
Water study for the Hunter Valley to understand aquifers and surface water.	28
Independent and transparent water assessment of mining projects (funding and training for more water experts who can work independently of mining companies?).	26
2005 Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Stream/Aquifer Guideline ¹ – Implement the aquifer standards outlined in the Guideline (150m from edge of alluvium).	25
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.	24
Strategic Land Use Plan linked to CMA management plan and local government area and used to guide ability to explore.	24
Hunter Communities Network four suggestions 1. Cover all coal trains through to the Port of Newcastle 2. Use improved and uniform blasting product to eliminate toxic orange brown emissions 3. Support a comprehensive regional study on the impacts of current operations on surface and groundwater systems in the Hunter 4. Rehabilitate mine sites at the same rate of disturbance by mining.	22
Regionally significant infrastructure fast tracked by government – more advocacy by NSWMC, local government and Regional Development Australia to get funding.	21
Industry with local community to meet and advocate to government for mining free zones.	18
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.	18



¹ This Guideline was referred to by workshop participants as “DIPNR 2005”

The following table records all 'ideas for action' created by stakeholders on the day:

Theme	Idea for action	Votes
Water	Water study of the Hunter Valley to understand aquifers and surface water.	28
	Independent and transparent water assessment of mining projects (funding and training for more water experts who can work independently of mining companies?).	26
	2005 Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Stream/Aquifer Guideline – Implement the aquifer standards outlined in the Guideline (150m from edge of alluvium).	25
	Ensure voids are back-filled to avoid saline and heavy metal water build up.	7
	Cumulative impacts study of existing mining operations (on water).	6
	Stop the diversion of rivers.	5
	2005 Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Stream/Aquifer Guideline to be adopted as minimum standard.	2
	Audit existing operations to ensure they are compliant and have capacity to store water onsite in flood conditions.	0
	Better opportunities/ assistance for the community to review environmental assessments.	0
	Industry to participate in and support the National Water Initiative.	0
	Industry to lodge rehabilitation bonds for water impacts.	0
	Put the onus of proof of loss of bore water on mining company.	0
	Establish a risk management 'trust' to fund rehabilitation of impacts of mining on water resources.	0
	New South Wales Minerals Council to support the 2005 Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Stream/Aquifer Guideline (setbacks from alluvium).	0
Dust, Air Quality, Noise and Health	Health Risk Assessments to go into Director General requirements, looking particularly at long term health issues as well as short term intense exposure. The assessments to be done at exploration stage.	24
	Air quality monitoring to go beyond best practice (i.e. speciation analysis of samples, 2.5µm monitoring and 1.0µm monitoring).	16
	Industry to continuously improve dust suppression.	14
	All 'Air Quality Network' monitors should measure – 2.5 Micron (PM 2.5).	9
	Particle identification (speciation) along with particle size.	9
	Increase number of Department of Planning and Infrastructure/Department of Mineral Resources compliance officers for 24/7 coverage.	8
	Government to make experts available for community forums for information and Q&A.	5
	Have experts available (e.g. Chris Eiser from the Office of Environment and Heritage) to meet with the community to discuss and answer questions on dust monitoring and dust reduction programs.	5
	Mining industry to take on 'best practice' response process to managing community complaints and concerns (i.e. logging commitments and promises).	5
	Industry to develop and implement best practice for fume management (blast fume).	5
	Mines not to operate after 10:00pm.	3
	Consistent complaints process/response across industry.	2
	Inclusion of broader industries (such as power stations) in this area.	2



Theme	Idea for action	Votes
Dust, Air Quality, Noise and Health (cont)	Improve rehabilitation to reduce exposed ground (e.g. reduce rate of clearing).	2
	Industry to adopt standards regarding – 2.5 Micron Particles.	1
	Increase the air quality network to expand into areas of future growth.	1
	Industry to contribute funding to research.	1
	Complete the installation of the UHAQMN and understand the results, then look to add further 2.5µm monitoring to the Valley if required.	1
	Conduct a study to identify if there is an acid rain issue.	1
	Use suitable synthetic dust suppression for haul roads.	0
	Advocate with Chief Health Officer Expert Advisory Panel to research possible link between mining and autism rates in the Upper Hunter.	0
	Community support for industry subsidising the hardware for first flush systems for householders.	0
Land Use	Industry (with local community) to meet and advocate to Government for mining free zones.	18
	Stakeholders and industry to advocate to Government to have one plan for how land is used in a region.	16
	Stakeholders on the Ministerial Reference Group for the Strategic Regional Land Use Plans advocate to Government for a full, broad consultation with the community on the draft plans.	3
	The minerals industry to advocate for consistency between strategic regional land use plans and local environment plans.	0
	Strategic Land Use Plan should be linked to Catchment Management Authority Management Plan and local government area, and used to guide ability to explore.	24
Social Impacts	Regionally significant infrastructure must be fast tracked by Government. There needs to be more advocacy by NSWMC, local government and Regional Development Australia – Hunter to get the funding for priority Hunter projects including Muswellbrook bypass, Scone overpass, Singleton bypass.	21
	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.	18
	Aboriginal and European heritage must be better considered (e.g. heritage homes must be preserved).	12
	Mining companies need to look at local procurement. The Local Chambers of Commerce need to help local businesses to be ready to provide services.	11
	Consider shift worker impacts on family, individual, community and volunteers (i.e. make 12 hour shifts into shorter shifts).	10
	Mining companies should build or buy houses for their employees to address the accommodation shortage and the subsequent impacts on lower income households because rent is too high.	7
	Money for local roads (not just State/Federal roads).	7
	Continued advocacy by NSWMC with local government/regional bodies to get money from Federal and State Government for health infrastructure. For example, the Muswellbrook and Denman Hospitals need more funds and there should be specialist wards (e.g. intensive care, children).	6
	State Government needs to improve passenger service between Upper Hunter/Newcastle/Sydney.	4



Theme	Idea for action	Votes
Social Impacts (cont)	Department of Planning should produce reliable data on growth projections which is cumulative of all industries in the region.	2
	Provide bus transport to bus mine workers in and out of operations in order to minimise road congestion.	2
	Improve local education facilities for mining skills (e.g. TAFE, universities).	1
	Money spent on environmental offset must be in local shire area. This should be explicitly stated in requirements for projects.	0
	Funding for homeless men – e.g. crisis housing, Men's shed.	0
	Engagement on how non-mined land (owned by mining companies) can be used by the community – including more productive use of the land.	0
	Companies need to communicate more honestly about projects, impacts etc.	0
	Companies need to address/support mine workers especially in relation to emotional stress/suicide rates.	0
	Change shift-work patterns.	0
Rehabilitation and Land Management	Synoptic plan (combined ideas): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urgent development of a new synoptic plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> strong community and industry input Include land classes Ensure plan is a living document. Stakeholders and industry to advocate to government to revise the synoptic plan for the Hunter Valley. Synoptic Plan – should link to site closure plans and rehabilitation completion criteria reviewed regularly.	49 (28) (6) (15)
	Information, data and tours of rehabilitation should be accessible to the public: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offsets: should be an industry-wide approach – coordinated credits/ landbank system to give management flexibility and strategic outcomes. Should include conservation organisations in management Industry-wide coordination to work towards rate of rehabilitation equalling rate of disturbance on industry basis. 	14
	Rehabilitation with community: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Mine life planning with community involvement and agreement Final void – community participation and partnership Establish a jointly funded research centre for Hunter Valley – with public access to industry and government database of areas of disturbed land/rehabilitated land. 	7
	Commit to put offsets in same local government as disturbance.	6
	Weeds – coordinated weed management program with neighbours and other mines.	6
	Overarching plan for environmental corridors (including wildlife) for area (i.e. Hunter Valley).	3



Theme	Idea for action	Votes
Rehabilitation and Land Management (cont)	Land classification policy to be used as a primary tool for land use/ rehabilitation – include water sources and water dating.	3
	There should be compliance and reporting against predictions documented in environmental impact assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Backfilling/long term water management in final voids to be investigated ▪ Buffer lands – coordinated plans of management for buffer lands to be developed. 	2
	Offset management to continue, agricultural and social land use of offsets. Offsets should not compete with agriculture.	2
	Commit not to use introduced species on rehabilitation (e.g. Rhodes Grass).	2
	Consider road reserves as part of the 'Weed Blitz' and develop a regional control plan and partnership between industry.	2
	Feral animal and pest management strategy.	1
	Review and define the definition of rehabilitation and land management to a state as close as possible to pre-existing state.	1
	Agree on the point at which critically endangered ecological communities should not be cleared regardless of offsets.	1
	Commit to return water licences to Crown upon rehabilitation completion.	1
	Improve visual amenities of mining sites (thinking about tourism aspects).	0
	Use existing undisturbed areas as a benchmark site to be used in the development of the Synoptic Plan.	0
	Industry fund to have independent overview of the Synoptic Plan.	0
	Improve visual amenity around mine sites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Best practice around visual mitigation ▪ Reward system for initiatives ▪ Industry to promote its rehabilitation initiatives. 	0
	Offsets need plan of management and industry to be accountable to it.	0
	Rehabilitation bonds should be reviewed by government and increase with costs and CPI annually.	0
	Certify organic wastes and risk-assess their usage on rehabilitation.	0
Hunter Communities Network At the end of the session, Hunter Communities Network proposed four ideas that spanned a number of topic issues. Participants were able to use one vote to vote for all four ideas.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cover all coal trains through to the Port of Newcastle 2. Use improved and uniform blasting product to eliminate toxic orange brown emissions 3. Support a comprehensive regional study on the impacts of current operations on surface and groundwater systems in the Hunter 4. Rehabilitate mine sites at the same rate of disturbance by mining. 	22



4 Actions for progress

Summary of actions for progress section

After the ideas were ranked the workshop participants considered the following questions in order to begin to develop actions based on the top ten ideas:

- What specific action needs to be taken to progress this idea right now?
- Who needs to be involved?

The actions developed by the participants are below. These actions are understandably high level given the restraints of the workshop, and will require further investigation and development in consultation with stakeholders. Stakeholders at the workshop signed up to be involved in the continuing development of the top ten ideas.

4.1 Water-related actions

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.



4.2 Dust, air quality, noise and health actions

- 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.
- NSWMC to approach NSW Health, Chief Health Officer to advocate for a set of guidelines for the mining industry. Meeting scheduled in the near future.
- Must include baseline data for exploration.
- Covering coal trains.
- Fumes from explosives: best practice methods.
- Improving rate of rehabilitation.

4.3 Land use actions

- 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.

4.4 Rehabilitation and land management

- 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.



4.5 Social impact-related actions

Local infrastructure

- 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.

Local employment

- 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.

5 Next steps

At the end of the workshop, participants were invited to sign up to remain involved in any of the actions that were of importance to them. Two volunteers were also requested to assist with reviewing this report prior to distribution. Three community representatives have volunteered to be reviewers.

APPENDIX: List of Organisations

Organisation	Participants	Observers
Anglo American	2	1
Ashton Coal Resources	2	
Association of Mining Related Councils	1	
AusIMM - Hunter Branch	1	
BHP Billiton Mt Arthur Coal	2	
Bloomfield Collieries	1	
Bylong Valley Protection Alliance	2	
CFMEU	1	
Coal & Allied	2	
Conservation Volunteers Australia	1	
Greening Australia	1	
Hunter Environment Lobby	1	
Hunter Region BEC	1	
Hunter Valley Protection Alliance	2	
Hunter Valley Thoroughbred Breeders Association	1	
Hunter Valley Water Users Association	1	
Hunter-Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority (CMA)	1	
Mangoola CCC	1	
Mt Thorley Warkworth CCC	2	
Muscle Creek Landcare	1	
Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce	1	
Muswellbrook Coal Company	2	
NSW Farmers Association	3	
NSW Health and Hunter New England Population Health	1	
NSW Mine Watch	1	
NSW Minerals Council	4	
Office of Environment and Heritage	2	
Peabody Energy	2	1
Regional Development Australia Hunter	1	
Rivers SOS	1	
Singleton Argus	1	1
Singleton Chamber of Commerce	1	
Singleton Healthy Environment Group	2	
Singleton Shire Council	1	
Upper Hunter Shire Council	2	
Vale Australia	3	
Wambo CCC	1	
Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation	1	
Wybong Action Group	6	
Xstrata Coal	2	
Individuals	4	

