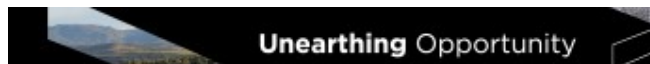




Hunter Valley Operations (HVO)

Community Consultative Committee (CCC) Meeting

Wednesday 13 November 2024 at 9.30 a.m.



Attendance

Chairperson

Dr. Colin Gellatly Independent Chair HVO CCC

Community Representatives

Brian Atfield Community Representative

Di Gee Community Representative

Company Representatives

Tim Slater Financial Controller

Andrew Speechly Manager Environment & Community

Nic McLaughlin Environment & Community Officer

Jason Martin Approvals Manager

Apologies

Dave Foster General Manager

CR. Sue George Singleton Council

Todd Mills Community Representative

Neville Hodkinson Community Representative

Janelle Wenham Community Representative

Michael Wellard Community Representative

Jeanie Hayes Community Representative

Minutes Sarah Purser

1. **Welcome**, Col opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance. Andrew ran through housekeeping and emergency procedures. **Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners**; *"We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land where we meet today and pay respect to Elders, past, present and future"*.

2. **Apologies**; Advised and recorded.

3. **Declaration of pecuniary interests/conflicts of interest**; *Standing*; Col and Sarah are engaged by HVO to provide the respective roles of Independent Chairperson and meeting minute taking.

4. Correspondence

3/9/24 Notification of proposed Cultural Burn.

5/9/24 Finalised / accepted Minutes from the Meeting held 8 May 2024.

9/9/24 Detail on Round Two Community Grant Funding.

19/9/24 Proposed new CCC member(s) advertising sent to Chairperson.

9/10/24 Draft Minutes for 28 August 2024 CCC Meeting.

11/10/24 Email to CCC members advising of advert for new CCC representatives

13/10/24 Acceptance of Minutes without change from CR. Sue George. No other comments received.

6/11/24 Invitation to today's Meeting, including Agenda and Business papers.

5. Confirmation of the previous Meeting's Minutes

Col called for formal approval of the Minutes for the Meeting held 28 August 2024 and the CCC confirmed their acceptance. The CCC Meeting Minutes are available on HVO's public website and can be accessed on-line via

[Documents Hunter Valley Operations \(hvo.com.au\)](https://www.hvo.com.au)

6. Matters Arising

HVO Continuation Project (HVOCP) Update; At today's Meeting by Jason Martin.

HVO to present their European Heritage Management Plan when finalised; Andrew confirmed the draft plan is under review and he will be able to provide an overview to the CCC in 2025.

HVO to outline the North Void Tailings Storage Facility Barrier Wall design when progressed; HVO are conducting another round of investigations via drilling and monitoring to ensure they select the right solution for this body of work. HVO will require approval from the NSW Resources Regulator (RR) to get access on to the surface of the tailings.

Actions Arising from the 28 August 2024 Meeting

HVO to advertise for Expressions of Interest from Community and Stakeholders to join this CCC

- ✓ Completed; HVO advertised on their website, social media and in the Hunter River Times newspaper during October 2024. The process is for DPHI to assess applications and then advise the outcome.

7. Company Reports | Update on Hunter Valley Operations

Operations Update

West Pit; There have been no significant changes in West Pit. Andrew identified via mapping where operations continue to move in a southerly direction and provided an overview of the terraces where HVO mine. An area that has been mulched prior to top soil stripping can be seen from Jerry's Plains, Brian noted that area looks good. HVO will be constructing a sediment dam to capture for when mining progresses. The strips are progressing in a south-easterly direction in Mitchell Pit. HVO have been operating the Howick Coal Preparation Plant in this pit since September 2024.

South Pit - Cheshunt; Diggers and rope shovels are in operation, the majority of dumping is below the natural topography in the pit. HVO will progress rehabilitation spoils going into 2025. There is no significant activity next to the Golden Highway.

Environment

Complaints

During the period 28 August to 1 November 2024 there had been 6 complaints in relation to blast, traffic and air quality. Andrew provided detail on each complaint and HVO's undertakings in response.

Rehabilitation - Year To Date (YTD)

18 hectares of rehabilitation have been seeded at Riverview, West Pit and Barry's. All of 2024's 69 hectares of rehabilitation areas have been shaped with 33 hectares topsoiled. HVO provided images of the contour construction and topsoiling at the East Tailings Storage Facility (TSF) and topsoiling at Cheshunt which will be done in line with the Geofluv natural landform design.

Rehabilitation Maintenance

Works have now been completed on the Carrington GMD. 89 hectares have been seeded with a pasture seed mix developed in consultation with Neil Nelson from Agvice. Andrew noted that HVO had mulched through that area and the pasture mix is having good results with the preferred species coming up i.e. chicory.

Post receipt of Crown Lands Licensing; works have recommenced at the WOOP dump with contour regrading and gypsum and compost application being completed. Andrew advised this area is located next to the Golden Highway truck stop and the use of organic material has had a positive effect in respect to the turf laying on the contour.

Biodiversity Offsets

Weed control and track management have been the main focus areas over the cooler months. This has included the repair of eroded access tracks at Mitchell Hill near Muswellbrook and Lantana removal at Condon View.

Operational Weed Management

Weed management has been focussed on Hunter River riparian areas and River Redgum communities. Andrew noted that HVO have been trialling weed wiping, as opposed to spraying, in areas where native regrowth is intermixed with weedy species as this is a more selective process.

Feral Pest Management - Programme of 2024 Activities

Andrew provided an overview of HVO's Wild Dog Control and "Hoggone" Pig Baiting programs that have been completed and are underway. Synchronised baiting and trapping programs are co-ordinated with other sites and the Hunter LLS. HVO rural licence pig control programs are ongoing via bounty payments. Kangaroo commercial harvests continue to be impacted by the closure of the chiller at Jerry's Plains. Andrew confirmed that HVO were granted a 'licence' to enable kangaroo control.

Heritage

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

Mitchell Pit South Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) was submitted on 20 August 2024. The 60 day Heritage NSW assessment has been extended to allow for additional consultation. Andrew identified the locations where HVO are seeking approval to salvage artefacts, noting that area will also get mulched and another sediment dam built.

HVO North Heritage Management Plan (HMP) and HVO South Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan (ACHMP) updates have been approved by Heritage NSW and the DPHI. Andrew noted the majority of changes were to align with new Glencore Standards and therefore provide consistency.

Cultural Burn; Andrew explained the purpose of this burn was to reduce the fuel and weed load within CM-CD1 which is located near Carrington. Andrew noted that CM-CD1 is the most significant Cultural Heritage site at HVO. HVO have ongoing obligations to monitor and maintain this area, no machinery, only hand tools can be utilised to manage this. The Cultural Burn was completed on 4 September 2024 with Wonnaruah Firesticks Alliance and Bindelong Corp, the HVO Emergency Response Team (ERT) Team were in attendance. The target was for four hectares, two hectares were completed which remains a good outcome. Andrew explained the point of these burns is to do them cool, he described the resulting mosaic pattern that is seen after the burn, allowing for the desired species to return. Andrew provided aerial images at the commencement of the burn and post burn.

Heritage

Historic Homestead Projects; Includes Archerfield, Carrington Stud and Wandewoi Homesteads.

HVO await the submission of quotes in response to the tender for parapet repair works at Wandewoi Homestead. Nelson Heritage Consulting has prepared a Conservation Management Plan for Archerfield. HVO will next select the priority works for 2025. Yard maintenance works and termite interception system inspections at LEP listed properties remain ongoing.

Di commended HVO for looking after these properties. Di noted that once they become unliveable and there is no one in them, they tend to go to ruin which is such a shame when there are such beautiful homesteads out there.

Reporting, Exceedances and Inspections

Andrew provided details of investigations and actions undertaken in relation to a post blast fume event on 15 October and a PM₁₀ (24 hour) exceedance on 4 November 2024.

HVO provided a report to the EPA in July in relation to mine water discharge from Dam 17N on 22 June 2024. On 3 October 2024 the EPA provided HVO with a show cause in relation to this event which the company responded to within that month. A second show cause from the EPA was received by HVO on 11 November 2024 which HVO will address. From an internal perspective, Andrew noted the importance of taking action to address the cause. In response to this incident HVO have updated company procedures and signage. Andrew noted that HVO will ultimately be decommissioning Dam 17N however will keep the CCC updated in relation to this matter.

Exploration Works 2024

Surface exploration planned within EL 5417 and EL 5606 has been postponed until 2025. HVO will conduct consultation with impacted stakeholders should further exploration works be required in EL's. The remainder of surface exploration drilling for 2024 is confined to Mining Leases.

Community Grants Program

Nic advised the following local organisations were successful in obtaining HVO Community Grant round two funding:-

- ✓ **Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service;** Charity Golf Day
- ✓ **Bellbird Cricket Club;** Gazebo's and I-Pads
- ✓ **Detour Youth Services;** Music Therapy Room
- ✓ **Singleton Neighbourhood Centre;** Signage
- ✓ **Samaritans Singleton;** Christmas Eve Lunch
- ✓ **Singleton Fire Brigade Social Club;** Annual Santa Lolly Run

Nic provided a pictorial overview of recipients who have received support from HVO:-

Hunter Valley Campdraft Club; Ablution Block

Sunnyfield Creative Hands; Pottery programme run by Hidden Button.

Muswellbrook High School; Colour Run that raised \$3,200.00 for Motor Neuron Disease.

Singleton Library; Little Bang Science Programme for pre-school aged science classes.

Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service; Charity Golf Day at Shortland Waters that raised \$36,000.00 for this service.

Detour Youth Services; Funding aid to purchase instruments for their music room.

HVO Community Information Sessions

These were held at Jerrys Plains School of Arts on Wednesday 23 October 2024 and 880 Maison Dieu Road, Maison Dieu on Saturday 26 October 2024.

Approvals

HVO Continuation Project (HVOCP)

Jason provided a recap on the HVOCP to date and noted the Project remains ongoing. HVO submitted the Development Application (DA) in December 2022. The EIS Public Exhibition held in early 2023 resulted in over 1,060 submissions, with 91% being supportive. The NSW DPHI engaged the Independent Expert Advisory Panel for Mining (IEAPM) to complete a review of water related aspects and greenhouse gas assessment undertaken. The IEAPM report broadly supports the approach and studies on water and emissions by HVO to support continued mining.

Following the IEAPM report DPHI has asked HVO via a "Request for Information" (RFI) to consider the implications of avoiding coal mining from the area referred to as gas Domain 1 which Jason identified via mapping. HVO is currently considering the RFI including undertaking additional modelling and mine planning to provide this information.

Time Extension Modification

Overview

HVO's Development Consent DA 450-10-2003 enables mining operations to 12 June 2025. Jason provided detail of a Modification to this DA to enable, if approved, HVO to continue mining to 31 December 2026. Apart from an extension of time, all activities that are currently approved under this DA are intended to continue and will remain the same under this Modification.

Assessment

The Modification Report will be prepared in accordance with the NSW Government State Significant Development (SSD) guidelines. Jason provided an overview of what will be included in the Modification Report, noting that given there is no additional disturbance beyond existing approval limits, the threshold for completion of a Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) is not triggered. An overview of the environmental assessment approach was provided.

Timeline and Next Steps

HVO submitted the scoping letter for the Modification to DA 450-10-2003 to the DPHI in October 2024. Consultation with key stakeholders will be conducted over October and November 2024. HVO provided information on both the Continuation Project and the Modification at the Jerry's Plains and Maison Dieu Community Information Sessions held in October 2024. The Modification Report will be lodged with the DPHI in November 2024. The Public Exhibition period will run through November and December 2024. A Response to Submissions document is anticipated to be submitted in January/February 2025. DPHI's assessment and determination is estimated for March/April 2025.

HVO Continuation Project (HVOCP) - Federal Approval Update

Draft Public Environmental Reports (PERs) for HVO North and HVO South were submitted to the DCCEEW in June 2024. Existing EPBC Act Referrals were subsequently withdrawn by HVO in consideration of the NSW RFI in October 2024. The Project still requires Federal EPBC Act Approval and HVO will submit revised EPBC Act referrals in consideration of the broader HVOCP.

8. Community Representative Feedback

Brian queried if HVO would have rainfall data for the previous month, he noted the varying amounts of rain received in this area. Brian recorded 569mm of rain at his property in October, whereas United Wambo had around 110mm more receiving a total 680mm. Nic responded that he believed HVO had received approximately 530mm. Andrew offered to include rainfall data in the CCC presentation and Brian responded that it would be good to see the differences within the area.

Action 1: Nic to include rainfall data in the CCC Meeting Business Papers

Andrew confirmed that monthly rainfall data is available via HVO's website:-

<https://www.hvo.com.au/documents/>

- Document Categories
- Monthly Environmental Monitoring Report

Brian queried if HVO had done any work on the Chain of Ponds. Andrew confirmed that HVO do own this property and there are no works planned at this stage other than maintenance i.e. inspections and termite control. Brian had thought about the Chain of Ponds as it had been a good while since the CCC had been there and he had not seen any updates on it.

Di noted that Brian had talked about the African Boxthorn at previous CCC meetings. Brian stated that it is growing everywhere and he had never seen it this prevalent. Di advised that the CSIRO have identified a potential rust fungus biocontrol agent for the African Boxthorn. Di attended a CSIRO meeting and has applied to start this control process on her farm. Di understood this rust virus will be more effective on smaller plants, it won't kill the African Boxthorn but slows down the reproduction of the berries. Di hoped this control of weed growth will see the number of African Boxthorns reduced over the years.

For further information and to register:-

CSIRO - African boxthorn biological control

Current research (November 2023 – June 2026)

<https://research.csiro.au/african-boxthorn/our-research/>

9. General Business

Andrew asked if the CCC had received any feedback on the mechanics of HVO's Complaints and Blasting Hotline i.e. on how it works or peoples interactions, members had not received any comments from community.

There was a general discussion around the preference to hold the HVO CCC Meetings of a morning or afternoon in 2025.

Actioned post meeting; Nic emailed the CCC on 13 November 2024, seeking their meeting preference time for 2025.

10.Next Meeting Date : Wednesday 5 February 2025

Col thanked all for their attendance and confirmed HVO's next meeting date.

Actions Arising from this Meeting

Action 1: Nic to include rainfall data in the CCC Meeting Business Papers

Updates for 2025

- HVO Continuation Project (HVOCP); Jason Martin
- HVO Time Extension Modification to DA 450-10-2003; Jason Martin
- HVO to present their European Heritage Management Plan when finalised; Andrew Speechly
- HVO to outline the North Void Tailings Storage Facility Barrier Wall design when progressed; Andrew Speechly

HVO CONTACTS

Website <https://hvo.com.au/>

Continuation Project via hvo.com.au/continuation

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100086443440525>

Meeting Minutes - <https://www.hvo.com.au/documents/>

HVO Complaints and Blasting Hotline: 1800 888 733 (free call)

SMS Blasting Notification System- Send an SMS to 0447 448 982 with word "subscribe" included in text