



## Environment Protection Authority – UHAQAC Minutes

<b>Today's Meeting Date:</b>	<b>23 May 2019 (No 32)</b>	<b>Next meeting date:</b>	<b>25 July 2019 (No 33)</b>
<b>Meeting location:</b>	<b>Singleton</b>	<b>Last Meeting Date:</b>	<b>21 February 2019 (No 31)</b>
<b>Meeting opened at:</b>	<b>10:00am</b>	<b>Meeting closed at:</b>	<b>12:20pm</b>
<b>Convenor</b>	<b>Mitchell Bennett</b>	<b>Minute Taker</b>	<b>Emily Ingram</b>
<b>Present:</b>	<p>John Tate – Chair</p> <p>Phillippe Porigneau – Department of Health (DoH)</p> <p>Cr Danny Thompson – Singleton Shire Council</p> <p>Dr Catherine Chicken – Commerce/Industry Representative</p> <p>Carolyn Obrien - Muswellbrook Shire Council</p> <p>Matthew Parkinson – Power Generation Industry Representative</p> <p>John Watson – Coal Mining Industry Representative</p> <p>Alex Newton - Coal Mining Industry Representative</p> <p>Mayor Wayne Bedggood – Upper Hunter Shire</p> <p>John Krey – Community Representative</p> <p>Leah Cook – Department of Planning and Environment (DPE)</p> <p>Loredana Warren – Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH)</p> <p>Michael Howat - EPA</p> <p>Mitchell Bennett – EPA</p> <p>Emily Ingram – EPA</p> <p>Bianca Morton – EPA</p> <p>Tara Famularo – Final Form Regeneration</p>		
<b>Apologies:</b>	<p>Thomas Green – Community Representative</p> <p>Dr Craig Dalton – DoH</p> <p>Geoff Sharrock – Community Representative</p>		

Adoption of minutes and review of actions arising				
No	Agenda Item	Action	Person Responsible	Completion Date
1.1	Adoption of previous minutes of meeting held <b>22 November 2019 (No 30)</b>	The minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2019 (No 30) were adopted without change.		
1.2	<b>Action 1</b> (Meeting 30): Send Hunter Valley Dust Risk Forecasting Trial Report to all committee members.	Report distributed.	Emily Ingram	4 December 2018
1.3	<b>Action 2</b> (Meeting 30): Send Mr Howat's presentation on Operation Dust Patrol to all committee members.	Presentation distributed.	Emily Ingram	4 December 2018
1.4	<b>Action 3</b> (Meeting 30): Send a copy of Mr Krey's presentation to all Committee members.	Presentation distributed.	Emily Ingram	6 December 2018
1.5	<b>Action 4</b> (Meeting 30): Adopt Committee Protocols for a six-month trial period.			22 November 2018
1.6	<b>Action 5</b> (Meeting 30): Schedule 2019 UHAQAC meetings.	Meeting dates circulated.	Emily Ingram	22 November 2018
1.7	<b>Action 6</b> (Meeting 30): OEH to report on Upper Hunter air quality forecasting.	Dealt with under agenda item 2.5	Loredana Warren	
1.8	<b>Action 7</b> (Meeting 30): OEH to report on WHO SO <sub>2</sub> standards.	Dealt with under agenda item 2.3	Loredana Warren	
1.9	<b>Action 8</b> (Meeting 30): Arrange a presentation on mine rehabilitation successes and innovation.	Dealt with under agenda item 2.1	Emily Ingram	
1.10	<b>Action 1</b> (Meeting 29): EPA to incorporate committee feedback into communication strategy for air quality for the Upper Hunter Region.	Dealt with under agenda item 2.2	Emily Ingram	
1.11	<b>Action 4</b> (Meeting 29) OEH to consider the committee's feedback on the info-graphic.		OEH	Ongoing
1.12	<b>Action 5</b> (Meeting 29): Review of online videos can be made to assist with the interpretation of results.		Emily Ingram	

<b>1.13</b>	<b>Action 3:</b> OEH to increase the size of the annual air quality trend information in the seasonal reports.	Agenda item 2.4		
<b>No</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
<b>1.14</b>	<b>Action 1</b> (Meeting 31): Planning workshop facilitator to draft letter for committee comment.	Letter finalised.	Dianne Sneddon	4 March 2019
<b>1.15</b>	Adoption of minutes of meeting held 21 February 2019 (No 31)	The minutes of the workshop held on 21 February 2019 (No 31) were adopted without change.		
<b>Agenda items</b>				
	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Action/Decision</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>2.1</b>	Mining Rehabilitation – successes and innovations	Ms Famularo explained that her company carries out conservation land management including mine site rehabilitation. Ground preparation, soil improvement and weed management are key factors in successful rehabilitation. Her company uses waste material from local businesses to increase soil organic matter. Locally sourced endemic seeds improve rehabilitation success. Organic matter retains water and to reduce dust. Some local stabilisation projects have used mesh made from coconut fibre. Sources of organic material that contain plastics are not used. While good rehabilitation practices may seem expensive, they are in demand because of their effectiveness.		
<b>2.2</b>	Update on planning workshop results	Mr Bennett summarised the outcomes of the committee’s planning workshop, noting that education and awareness related actions were most strongly supported. These actions will be progressed through the EPA’s communications strategy. EPA’s Holly Love will update the committee on this later in the meeting via Skype.  Many other actions require cooperation with other government agencies. The EPA will work through these and report back to the committee once any changes resulting from the recent election have been worked through.		

	Agenda Item	Notes	Action/Decision	Status
		In response to questions about the future of the committee, Mr Bennett encouraged the committee to recognise the valuable contribution it had made to improve air quality monitoring and management in the Hunter. The EPA will continue to value the advice and encouragement of the committee in tackling air quality issues, particularly in and around Muswellbrook.		
2.3	Sulfur dioxide (SO <sub>2</sub> ) and nitrogen dioxide (NO <sub>2</sub> )	Cr Thompson expressed his view that the current national standards for SO <sub>2</sub> and NO <sub>2</sub> are too high and that the committee should advocate to have them lowered. Upper Hunter power stations are major sources of these compounds. Ms Ingram advised that EPA Victoria is the lead agency for public consultation on a review of national air quality standards for these compounds. An information session is scheduled for Newcastle in July 2019. Mayor Bedggood suggested that expert advice needs to be considered before a common view could be formed on the need for change.	<p><b>Action 1:</b> Cr Thompson and Mr Tate to attend information session and report to the committee.</p> <p><b>Action 2:</b> Ms Warren to provide Cr Thompson with monitoring data.</p>	
2.2 continued	Update on Special Planning Facilitation Workshop results (continued)	<p>Ms Holly Love, EPA Stakeholder Engagement Unit, joined the meeting via Skype. She observed that the committee's planning workshop expressed concern about the community's lack of awareness of the committee; their lack of understanding about air quality; and their lack of awareness of the EPA's actions to improve air quality.</p> <p>The draft communications strategy aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate the community on local air quality;</li> <li>• Increase knowledge of the air quality alert system;</li> <li>• Educate the community about factors leading to poor air quality;</li> <li>• Educate the community on how to engage with the EPA;</li> </ul>	<b>Action 3:</b> EPA to circulate draft communications strategy to the committee.	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase understanding of the roles of government agencies; and</li> <li>• Build trust in the EPA's ability to regulate industry.</li> </ul>		
	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Action/Decision</b>	<b>Status</b>
		<p>The implementation plan includes the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to work with OEH to improve the air quality alert system;</li> <li>• Continue wo work with the committee to improve the seasonal air quality reports;</li> <li>• Review information on the EPA's website related to Upper Hunter air quality;</li> <li>• Hold and attend local events to increase face-to-face contact between EPA and the community;</li> <li>• Investigate local communication opportunities;</li> <li>• Use social media to promote the alert system and to and to increase awareness of dust reduction programs.</li> </ul>		
<b>2.4</b>	Upper Hunter Air Quality Monitoring Network Summer 2018	<p>Ms Warren reported on air quality in the Upper Hunter during summer 2018-19:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dust levels recorded by Dust Watch in January were the worst observed since records began in 2005 due to drought;</li> <li>• Elevated PM10 levels at Merriwa on 15 and 16 December were due to dust from Queensland. However, this dust did not move down the valley as it normally does.</li> <li>• Annual average PM<sub>10</sub> levels rose at most NSW monitoring stations due to the drought.</li> <li>• If significant rainfall is not received in the next 12 months, NSW will experience unprecedented drought.</li> <li>• OEH is continuing work on an infographic featuring: general information on air quality; an overview of Upper Hunter air quality; and information on air quality monitoring, potential health effects and precautions.</li> </ul>		

	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Action/Decision</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>2.5</b>	Upper Hunter air quality forecasting	Ms Warren advised that OEH is collaborating with CSIRO to develop air quality forecasting for the whole of NSW by 2022. Forecasting in the Hunter Valley challenging because of the dynamic nature of sources of air pollutants.		
<b>2.6</b>	EPA update	Mr Howat explained that the EPA's Dust Patrol program aimed to minimise the increase in dust from the mined areas between Merriwa and Singleton during spring and summer 2018-19. This was successful with only one day exceeding the PM10 target during this period. An infringement notice issued to one mine during Dust Patrol had been challenged. The EPA will review and adapt the program for the coming spring and summer. The EPA's Dust Assessment Handbook is being updated to include photos showing achievable dust levels from excavators. This will be discussed at an upcoming forum with mining industry representatives before being finalised.		
<b>2.7</b>	General Business	Mr Bennett advised that Ms Ingram would be leaving the EPA, and Mr Howat would be moving to a different position in the EPA. The committee thanked both for their contributions. Ms Morton will be committee secretary.		
		Meeting closed 12:30		