

# HUNTER VALLEY OPERATIONS

Hunter Valley Operations (HVO)  
Community Consultative Committee (CCC) Meeting  
Wednesday 20 May 2020

## Attendance

### Chairperson

Dr. Colin Gellatly Independent Chair HVO CCC

### Community Representatives

Brian Atfield Community Representative

Jeannie Hayes Community Representative

Dr. Neville Hodgkinson Community Representative

Di Gee Community Representative

### Singleton Council

Cr. Hollee Jenkins Singleton Council

### Company Representatives

Philip Price Operations Manager

Bruce Gould Production Manager

Andrew Speechly Manager Environment & Community

Merri Bartlett Environment & Community Officer

### By Invitation

Peter Bowman Environment and Community Officer

### Apologies

Todd Mills Community Representative

Janelle Wenham Community Representative

David Love Community Representative

Michael Wellard Community Representative

Tony Galvin General Manager

Minutes Sarah Purser

- 1. Welcome;** Col welcomed members attending via video and phone conference due to COVID-19. Andrew shared his experience on how to effectively use WebEx for on-line meetings.

### *Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners - Chair;*

*"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 advised that both he and Sarah are engaged by HVO to provide the roles of independent Chairperson and meeting note taking. Hollee advised that she is engaged by a business that does sub-contract work for companies that work for HVO.

- 4. Out of Session Correspondence : Circulated by Merri & Andrew via email;**

3/3/20 Draft Minutes from the CCC Meeting held 19 February 2020

25/3/20 Notification on how HVO are managing COVID-10 risks on site

2/4/20 Advice on HVO's Community Grants - Round One 2020

9/4/20 WebEx Video Conferencing arrangements for the 20 May 2020 CCC and detail on Enforceable Undertaking

6/5/20 Agenda and Business Papers for the 20 May 2020 CCC Meeting

- 5. Confirmation of the previous Meeting's Minutes**

Col called for formal approval of the minutes for the Meeting held 19 February 2020. The CCC Meeting Minutes are available on HVO's public website - In-Site, and can be accessed on-line via <https://insite.hvo.com.au>

## 6. Matters arising from the previous meeting held 19 February 2020 - Action Items

**Action 1:** HVO to provide an overview of the Trigger Action Response Plan (TARP) they created and implemented in response to the smoke conditions that were a result of the December 2019 and January 2020 bushfires in the Hunter Valley

✓ **At today's Meeting - presented by Andrew**

Andrew provided an overview of the TARP that was utilised by HVO to determine when air quality was impaired to the point that it may impact on workers health and safety. The triggers were based on nearby Upper Hunter Air Quality Monitoring Networks from which HVO then determined appropriate responses to levels of exposure for each of the companies different work groups.

Neville felt that HVO's TARP was a good indication of guidelines and procedures but he would like to see what sort of pressure the mine was under in terms of high air quality levels and how HVO had responded by identifying and setting the actual targets. Andrew responded that this detail had been provided in response to the question on what HVO had done in their workplace for employees and contractors in relation to poor air quality and Neville clarified that his interest was also in relation to what sort of levels HVO had responded to in regard to various areas of plant.

Neville explained that the communities focus is on understanding what the air quality levels are and how this aligns with the potential health impacts of these. Neville explained that the Mining Dialogue were in discussion around setting a national one hour level for PM2.5's, so this also relates to his enquiry. Andrew confirmed that he would provide more detail around triggers in response to Neville's query.

✓ **Actioned Post Meeting;** Andrew circulated HVO's Bushfire Smoke TARP inclusive of more detailed data around the Air Quality Index Pollutant Level, how this measurement is calculated, and what the trigger levels were.

Neville felt certain that there would have been discussions at a national level about air quality during the bushfires and believed it would have been valuable for mining companies to share detail on how these conditions had impacted on their operations, as well as their employees. Neville felt if this type of reporting was done in isolation by Government organisations that it would not then capture what the community and mine workers had experienced.

**Action 2:** HVO to provide detail of properties that are registered as Historical Properties and the Maintenance Plans in place for these

✓ **Presented at today's Meeting - Presented by Peter Bowman**

**Listed on the NSW State Heritage Register is;**

*The Chain of Ponds Inn;* located on the old New England Highway.

**HVO have two registered properties on the Singleton Council LEP;**

*Archerfield and outbuildings*

✚ *Stafford Homestead and Clifford Homestead (ruins).*

**Historic Assets | Buildings of Interest include;**

*The Dight Family Grave;* at Stafford Farm

✚ *The Cockatoo Fence;* Peter advised this timber fence was built by the Hobden family and may well be more than a century old, it is located on a landholding outside of HVO's mining lease. HVO made an undertaking within their South Modification to conduct an Assessment of Significance Report on Cockatoo Fence which was completed in 2019. Peter explained that this involved HVO collating various information that they had in hand and then conducting a field inspection to locate the fence, where it was noted that some sections of this fence remain in-tact.

✚ *The Grand Lodge,* is located at Carrington Stud. The exact age of this building is not known but most likely would have been built in the 1800's.

✚ *Carrington Stud Homestead;* this property faces the Hunter River at Carrington Stud and is known for its occupation by the White Family who were prominent in the Horse Breeding Industry.

✚ *Wandewoi Homestead;* this property was built by the White Family who were well known in the Horse Racing Industry.

## Management of Properties

Peter explained that HVO manage all top tier buildings and aggregations that the company are not able to occupy for a variety of reasons i.e. when they are not able to be rented or resided in. HVO have Maintenance Asset Protection Zones around these vacant listed properties which includes maintaining fire breaks to provide protection from bushfire and conducting Annual Pest Control Inspections e.g. HVO were in the process of reinstalling exterior termite interceptors for the Chain of Ponds Inn. The company also conducts external repairs to keep the structures in-tact by keeping water away from these structures. Peter advised that HVO's management processes will ensure these buildings are still in place and enable the community to have input into their future at the post mining phase.

Peter noted that whilst Archerfield has a point of difference; being part of a functioning farm and acknowledged that the home is in great shape, this property is still subject to maintenance expectations and audits for HVO's Property Portfolio.

Neville was concerned that all these good property management programs that are being conducted by HVO are not known to the community as there are no reports on the website. Neville felt there should be community involvement with regard to the management of these properties now and detail shared more widely as to what has been done and what is being planned. Neville further suggested there could be value in meetings being instigated specifically around Historical Heritage that would complement what is reported to the CCC members.

Neville noted that reports are being generated, such as the Significance Report on Cockatoo Fence in 2019, and felt it would be valuable for this type of report to be made available on HVO's website as he feels people in the community are interested in what is going on. Neville advised that he has had the opportunity to visit a number of these sites in the past and understands that many were inhabited when HVO took over, and identified his primary concern is that properties will be left to ruin.

Andrew put forward that the topic of Historical Properties and their associated Maintenance Plans be kept as a standing item at future CCC Meetings for HVO to provide updates around their property management plans and undertakings. Andrew advised that the company is open to hosting site visits at these properties to visit these sites in conjunction with the CCC Meetings, or outside of this forum.

Andrew advised that in terms of the company website, HVO are required to manage a significant amount of data and information, he confirmed there is not a requirement to upload Heritage data. Andrew explained that HVO are required to meet what regulatory obligations request the company have on their website, however if there is a community interest in those reports he will communicate those to the CCC, noting that the information will then become public through these Meetings.

### **ACTION 1: HVO to add Historical Properties and their associated Management/Maintenance Plans as a standing Agenda Item for future CCC Meetings**

Neville was most interested to see these Management/Maintenance Plans for Historical Heritage Properties and Andrew confirmed that HVO will provide the processes in place for their properties and that the CCC is an appropriate forum to do this. Col agreed with Andrew that this would be a good initiative from HVO to share this detail at the CCC Meetings.

Neville added that he would like to see something in place that would tie all Heritage Properties together and queried if community need to go back to the Department in terms of producing a Heritage Plan for all properties. Neville felt that if Heritage was tied into one basket, people could see and understand more about these properties and that it would be of benefit for the community to be involved in what is presently happening, rather than wait for some 20 years until they were to be handed over. Neville felt an opportunity for community input may have some impact on how mines maintain these properties in the near future.

Col questioned if there were no regulatory requirements for HVO to have Heritage Management Plans and Andrew confirmed that is not in place through the Development Approval, inclusive of providing this detail on the company website, but the company does have obligations under State and Local Regulations i.e. Chain of Ponds Inn, Archerfield and Stafford have those obligations.

Andrew agreed that it would be of value to HVO to have information around Heritage Management centralised and for there to be an understanding around the maintenance and management that HVO are currently working through. Andrew advised that HVO had wanted to communicate to the CCC that despite there not being a requirement for documentation, these obligations and works are still being conducted.

Col agreed that HVO's commitment to include an update on Historical Properties as a standing item on the CCC Agenda was a positive way forward and asked HVO to give consideration to any documentation that provides valuable updates in this area to be shared with the CCC, he felt this was a good initiative from the company and agreed with Neville that it would also be good for community.

Hollee queried how often the Singleton Heritage Committee receives updates from HVO with what is being undertaken around Heritage Property and Peter responded that he was not aware of any request from that committee for HVO to provide any updates over the past two years. Peter felt the Singleton Heritage Committee may have asked for input when Singleton Council revised the LEP in 2013 but would need to seek confirmation on that. Hollee felt the Singleton Heritage Committee would be a good avenue for HVO to reach out to in an effort to keep as many people as possible updated around Historical Properties and Andrew confirmed that HVO could look into doing this.

**Action 3:** HVO to provide detail on how the company looks for and identifies artefacts when conducting exploration work

✓ **At today's Meeting**

Identification of artefacts prior to conducting exploration work is conducted by appointed and qualified Archaeologists, working in conjunction with Registered Aboriginal Parties (if within the area subject to the Development Consent). The studies are carried out consistent with regulatory guidelines, corporate protocols and approved Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plans.

**There are two strands to this process** that influence what HVO do or implement on the ground and the first level is the three Guidelines published by the Office of Environment & Heritage (OEH) that outline Codes of Practice for protection of artefacts in relation to; 1) Investigation 2) Assessment and 3) Reporting.

**First strand;**

- ✚ OEH Guideline, Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in NSW
- ✚ OEH Guideline, Code of Practice for Archaeological Investigation of Aboriginal objects in NSW 2010
- ✚ OEH Guideline, Guide to investigating, assessing and reporting on Aboriginal cultural heritage in NSW 2011

**Second Strand;**

These OEH Guidelines are all running parallel and are included in HVO's existing two Development Approvals; one for the North and one for the South. In addition, HVO were required to prepare a Management Plan for each of these approvals.

- ✚ Hunter Valley Operations HVO North Aboriginal Heritage Management Plan
- ✚ Hunter Valley Operations HVO South Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan

Peter added that detail of yielded artefacts are reported by HVO to The Office of Environment and Heritage and information is then entered into the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) that provides a public data base, along with being entered into HVO's Aboriginal Heritage & Cultural Management data systems. Peter summarised that these are the processes, regulations and protocols that HVO adhere to.

Col asked members for feedback and Neville enquired what HVO do with European Heritage artefacts i.e. what happens to these and where are they stored. Peter responded that where feasible, HVO work to store artefacts in situ and if they are able to be secured within the building where they belong that is deemed the best place. Peter added that should these artefacts be removed and placed elsewhere, there is a chance that their connection with the site may be lost.

Peter confirmed that artefacts in relation to European Heritage are therefore stored in the buildings themselves and provided the example of Archerfield Stables where there are the original harnesses and bridle-ware for the Draft Horses, along with some functioning tools from the Blacksmith Shop.

The artefacts that HVO have are the ones they inherited when the Glencore Joint Venture took over management of the site and this is the same for Chain of Ponds Inn and Stafford Homestead. HVO does not have an offsite secure facility for the storage of European artefacts but confirmed there is one for Aboriginal artefacts.

Neville queried if HVO have an inventory of items, recorded via photographs and reports, as the community has expressed interest to look at that type of detail on an ongoing basis. Neville noted that the CCC had been provided with a tour of Archerfield but Heritage artefacts did not seem to have been identified at the time. Peter advised he has a strong knowledge around the items located at Archerfield and should it be arranged for the CCC to take a site tour, he would be more than happy to identify these for the group.

Neville felt the mines have an opportunity to arrange for people to visit these Heritage properties and it would be of value for the companies to be able to identify and explain historical items, he queried if documentation around these type of items would exist. Peter was not aware of any register that may have been prepared by Rio or the HVO Joint Venture that goes into minute details around agricultural implements, furniture etc but he agreed with Neville and could see the benefit and improvement that would result from having items documented.

Neville reiterated that the community would be interested to see how items may be documented and it was agreed that HVO commence with some detail around Archerfield. Col felt that would be of great benefit and was pleased with HVO's initiative.

**ACTION 2: HVO to collate an inventory of European Heritage artefacts that are stored within heritage buildings.**

## 7. Company Reports | Update on Hunter Valley Operations - Presented by Philip

### SAFETY SNAPSHOT

#### Injury Rates as at May 2020

Total Recordable Injury Frequency Rate (TRIFR) –0.83 (target is 3.00)

Lost Time Injury Frequency Rate (LTIFR) –0 (target is 1.00)

Philip advised the results were good and an improvement on the previous year (2019).

### COVID-19 -MANAGEMENT MEASURES

Philip provided an extensive overview of the multiple controls implemented to ensure employee health and safety and compliance with Public Health Orders. Philip acknowledged assistance from the Mount Thorley Warkworth site who guided them to implement Thermal Imaging Cameras and praised the positive attitude of work crews who had put in a good effort and been actively involved in supporting these measures.

### MINING OPERATIONS

Philip provided an update and overview of activities in West Pit, Carrington (which as at November 2019 had become a Tailings Storage Facility), Cheshunt Pit and Riverview Pit.

### TRUCK SOUND ATTENUATION

HVO have 81 trucks, 78 have been sound attenuated which equates to 96% of the fleet. Andrew advised that there are three trucks, remaining until HVO's fleet is sound attenuated. In addition, HVO are going back to some earlier trucks attenuated back in 2013 and those will get a retrofit to decrease noise further.

## REPORTING, EXCEEDANCES, INSPECTIONS AND AUDITS

### Enforceable Undertaking with EPA in relation to water pollution incident on 18 March 2019

Andrew confirmed HVO had advised the CCC that the company had entered into an Enforceable Undertaking in relation to an old rehabilitation slope that had a failure of contours due to erosion, which allowed water to run to Farrells Creek and identified this area via mapping.

#### *Andrew explained that the key elements to arise as a result of this Enforcement Undertaking:-*

HVO have committed to pay a financial contribution in July, for the 2021 financial year, to Hunter Local Lands Services (HLLS) that will enable HLLS to undertake a project to improve Travelling Stock Reserves in the Singleton LGA. HLLS will manage these works which will reduce erosion and sediment from those areas via stock control and additional fencing.

HVO will conduct regular monitoring of historic rehabilitation areas inclusive of an annual walk over inspection of their rehabilitation areas that will ensure all areas are monitored to identify if anything significant may be occurring.

HVO's focus will be on the incident location and the company is committed to remediate that area with more permanent works to include; water management, improvements in soils, contours and soil growth, and reseeded of enhanced vegetation to stabilise that soil.

### Penalty Infringement Notice from the Resource Regulator

Andrew confirmed that HVO had also received a Penalty Infringement Notice from the Resource Regulator relating to this same incident and were fined for not being in compliance with the Mine Operational Plan to maintain these areas.

### Independent Environmental Audit Report was submitted on 2 April 2020 and HVO received confirmation from the DPIE on 30 April that this report has been accepted.

Andrew advised this Independent Audit had been completed and is conducted every three years. This process provides an audit of HVO's approvals including; DA's, EPL, Water Licences, Management Plans and Mining Tenements. Andrew confirmed that these are independent audits, whereby HVO will seek proposals from consultancies which are then provided to the Department who will then endorse an Independent Auditor. Andrew explained HVO has approximately 1,900 obligations in these approvals. There were 28 non compliances recorded; 0 high risk, 1 moderate risk (which related to water discharge incidents - reporting during the period), 12 low risk and 15 administrative. For each non compliance HVO was required to provide a response as to the companies undertakings. HVO responded to all findings and the Independent Environmental Audit Report is now publically available on the company website <https://insite.hvo.com.au/document-library/audits-hvo>

## ENVIRONMENT

### Complaints YTD 2020

HVO had received no complaints for 2020 prior to two noise complaints being recorded 19 May 2020 in relation to a horn. Andrew confirmed the OCE's were able to quickly identify the source and shut down the shovel contributing to where the noise had been coming from. Contact was made with both complainants who were satisfied with the response undertaken by HVO.

### Rehabilitation

*Total rehabilitation YTD 2020 was 13.5 hectares*

#### EOM April 2020:

- ✓ Released: 38.5 ha
- ✓ Shaped: 33.7 ha
- ✓ Topsoiled: 13.5 ha
- ✓ Seeded: 13.5 ha

Andrew noted that top soil is due to be placed on the top of Cheshunt that will see HVO implementing their first natural looking landform known as a Geofluvial landform. Once shaped and it has been confirmed that the construction meets the design, HVO will progress to topsoiling that area.

### Aerial Seeding

Aerial seeding is proposed (weather permitting) for early June 2020, Andrew identified the proposed 400 hectare area via mapping and explained the purpose of seeding is for dust management on exposed stockpiles that are not ready for rehab.

### Feral Pest Management

Peter provided an overview of HVO's Program of activities for 2020, including detail around the synchronised baiting/trapping programs - targeting pigs, wild dogs and foxes in conjunction with Local Lands Services, and an overview of the Autumn and Spring programs.

In relation to feral pig control Peter acknowledged and credited the HLLS Control Program that was undertaken in the Merriwa and Murrurundi areas in 2018 and 2019 which resulted in a significant reduction of wild pigs. Peter acknowledged that the HLLS did a brilliant job in co-ordinating landholders, who were also joined by a number of other power generating and coal mining energies, to form a co-ordinated and synchronised approach with precise timing.

Peter noted there now is also a co-ordination of data with the HLLS having some effective telephone applications that allow contractors to record where they are trapping, baiting and also numbers and this then feeds into the HLLS data set.

As a result the HLLS are able to manage pest control with a higher level of precision than in the past, Peter commended the HLLS and noted that HVO are pleased to be able to participate in those programs.

### COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIPS

Round One of Community Funding is now closed. HVO received 12 applications which is a little bit down compared to previous rounds and Andrew acknowledged that this was likely the result of COVID-19 restrictions. Andrew advised that HVO are currently assessing these applications and will advise the CCC of the successful applicants.

### REMINDER OF HVO CONTACT DETAILS

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

To make an environmental complaint / Find out road closure times for blasting / Attended 24 / 7

**Websites:**

HVO -information about the operation: <https://hvo.com.au>

HVO InSite-environmental monitoring performance: <https://insite.hvo.com.au/>

**SMS Blast Notification System**

Community members can subscribe to the blasting notification system to receive an SMS alert at no cost. To register, please send an SMS to 0447 448 982 with your details and make sure to include the word subscribe in the text.

Andrew asked if members were aware of people in the community that would like access to HVO's Blasting Notifications to direct these enquires to the company, he added that HVO will publish a Newsletter in the near future to also remind community of their contact details.

## 8. Community Representative Feedback

### *Dr Neville Hodkinson*

Neville queried who proposes the Enforceable Undertakings (EU) that mining companies commit to, he noted that he had seen an EU in the past in relation to funding provided to bird life. Neville felt that given there will be Enforceable Undertakings from time to time, perhaps there would be an opportunity to direct these funds towards conducting works in relation to Historical Heritage Properties. Neville sees this as providing a positive spin for any company receiving an Enforceable Undertaking and was interested how these undertakings were assessed and determined.

Andrew advised that the EPA has Policy & Guidelines for Enforceable Undertakings, these required HVO to address items in an Application Pro forma and then provide a proposal to the EPA. The EPA then reviews the application to confirm that there is an adequate response to the incident. Andrew added that there is also a requirement to meet the relevance to the incident and in the case of HVO's Enforceable Undertaking the project was required to identify a community project relating to erosion and sediment control.

Andrew conducted research to determine what work opportunities there were that HVO may be able to support and contact with the HLLS resulted in the identification of some projects. Andrew explained the first step includes identifying an organisation that are able to make up a proposal around what the specific milestones are to the EPA and noted also that HVO need to have confidence that the nominated company are able to conduct those works. Andrew acknowledged that there are good ideas for EU opportunities but any proposed works needs to occur and therefore requires the organisation around it to be able to implement the works and that is independent of HVO.

Neville acknowledged that HVO did canvas for projects to support via the EU and hoped that would mean there was opportunity for community involvement to put to mines general projects that are deemed worthwhile with the understanding that it will need an organisation sitting behind it capable of completing these works.

Neville felt the Historical Society at Singleton and Singleton Council would be two organisations that would support projects that may be proposed as a result of Enforceable Undertakings. Neville queried if there would be value in community approaching the EPA with projects that could be considered for future Enforceable Undertakings and Andrew felt that was a very good idea, as this would support mining companies in confirming they had also been made aware of the same proposed projects.

Andrew confirmed that it does take some research to find a project that meets the EPA pro forma and to ensure a business case is strong enough to complete the nominated works. Neville appreciated this understanding as he felt it was important that projects do not get left sitting for a number of years should they not have adequate business support.

### *Cr Hollee Jenkins*

Hollie advised that Council Elections had been postponed for 12 months and therefore Counsellors will continue to retain their current CCC committees, therefore Hollie will remain in place as Council Representative for the HVO CCC.

## 9. General Business

Col called for any General Business and nil was advised, he thanked all for participating in today's meeting via video and teleconference, and asked all to stay safe. Hollie added that she hoped the group will be able to meet face to face at the next CCC Meeting to be held in September.

## 10. Next Meeting: 9 September 2020 1.30p.m. Hunter Valley Services

### ACTIONS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING

**ACTION 1:** HVO to add Historical Properties and their associated Management/Maintenance Plans as a standing Agenda Item for future CCC Meetings

**ACTION 2:** HVO to collate an inventory of European Heritage artefacts that are stored within heritage buildings.