



**Hunter Valley Operations (HVO)
Community Consultative Committee (CCC) Meeting
Wednesday 5 November 2025 at 9.30 a.m.**



Attendance

Chairperson

Dr. Colin Gellatly Independent Chair

Community Representatives

Brian Atfield Community Representative
 Neville Hodgkinson Community Representative
 Jeanie Hayes Community Representative
 Michael Wellard Community Representative
 Peter Nichols Community Representative
 Todd Mills Community Representative

Singleton Council Representative

Cr. Sue George Singleton Council

Company Representatives

Ben De Somer Manager Environment & Community
 Nic McLaughlin Environment & Community Officer
 Ben Griffiths HVO Vacation Student
 Jason Martin Approvals Manager

Apologies

Janelle Wenham Community Representative
 Di Gee Community Representative
 Dave Foster General Manager

Minutes

Sarah Purser

1. Welcome

Col opened the meeting and welcomed members. Nic confirmed that a mine tour to view rehabilitation had been arranged following the CCC Meeting for those interested. Nic 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

- 1/09/25 Invitation for CCC members to attend HVO Community Information Sessions at Jerrys Plains and/or Maison Dieu.
- 29/9/25 27 August 2025 CCC Meeting Draft Minutes sent to CCC members for comment. No suggested changes received.
- 17/10/25 Invitation to today's CCC 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 27 August 2025. 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/Documents/Hunter_Valley_Operations)

6. Matters Arising

HVO to continue to provide the CCC with updates on the HVO Continuation Project.

- ✓ At today's meeting by Jason Martin.

HVO to provide continued updates on the detailed design for the North Void Tailings Storage Facility Barrier Wall.

- ✓ At today's meeting by Ben De Somer.

Ben confirmed the last elements of ground water modelling were due for completion end of November 2025, these outputs will put HVO in a position to move forward with the design scenario. Concurrent with that modelling HVO had gone out to market for the general layout design, pending final details around depth and width needing to be finalised, tenders were under review. As part of HVO's Environmental Protection Licence there is a requirement for the barrier wall to be in place approximately mid-2027.

Tour of rehabilitation areas.

- ✓ Scheduled after today's meeting.

7. Company Reports | Update on Hunter Valley Operations

Operations Update

West Pit & Mitchell Pit (West)

Mining continues in a south west direction, with dumps being built behind operations. The mining sequence will remain much the same until end of 2025, early 2026. As terraces are completed in West Pit equipment will move to Mitchell pit, anticipated for 2026.

Peter asked if HVO were self sufficient and not needing to extract water from the River, Ben confirmed that HVO were not currently drawing water. Ben detailed upgrades to storage capacity and discharge infra structure that HVO would undertake should the Continuation Project be approved. Ben explained these are to improve HVO's self sufficiency and limit intake of water from the River. Peter commended HVO for this undertaking.

Peter identified an area in West Pit where a large amount of top soil was in the process of being stripped, he queried when HVO intend to mine that area as that can be a source of dust. Ben provided an overview of the projected mining sequence for that area and timing, as the operations move forward HVO will bring the ridge down. Peter asked if spray seed could be utilised to seal for dust when this area is driven over and Ben explained the challenges due to steep terrain.

Peter referred to the old flats where there had been magnificent deep topsoil. Peter felt these had been some of the best river flats in the Hunter due to a large billabong there. Ben confirmed that there is specific criteria in place for restoring this alluvial area within the current West Wing, emphasising the importance of correct layering and sequencing. Peter responded it would be great to get a good result there.

Cheshunt (South)

The coal and waste sequence had continued as previously reported to the CCC. Ben identified an area in Riverview Pit that had been mined in the past where HVO will move old overburden to access lower seams. Jeannie queried the economics to go back in and pull out coal from a previously mined area, who undertakes the long term planning, and expressed an interest in coal market prices. Peter queried the quality of coal in Riverview Pit and saleability. Ben confirmed that mining into these deep areas tends to yield some semi-soft products. Ben provided an overview of HVO's short and long term planning teams along with the Blast & Drill teams role. The planning process includes but is not limited to; modelling based on market forecast, mine planning processes and the application of a NPV analysis.

Environment

Comparative Rainfall 2023 to October 2025

HVO provided annual rainfall data by month for 2023 and 2024, alongside monthly rainfall for 2025. Jeannie queried weather forecasts and Ben confirmed warmer and wetter conditions were predicted.

Comparative Rainfall 2013 to 2025

HVO presented the annual rainfall data for this period that indicated the average total was in the order of 600mm. Rainfall for 2025 had aligned with that average as at October 2025.

Monthly Rainfall 2025

For the period 1 January to 21 October 2025 the total rainfall recorded at Cheshunt was 653.4mm and HVO Corporate was 635.8mm. Brian confirmed that he had recorded 700ml of rain this year.

Rehabilitation

HVO's rehabilitation target for 2025 is 55.6 hectares of new rehabilitation and 10.8 hectares of Growth Medium Development (GMD). Ben noted the rehabilitation above Cheshunt Pit, that can be seen on the left hand side when travelling along Lemington Road from the Highway towards the HVO site, appears to integrate well with the surrounding landscape.

Year to date in the order of 47 hectares of bulk shaping had been completed with 29 hectares topsoiled and 18 hectares seeded. All GMD has had an initial and follow up weed spraying. Seeding was underway.

In response to a query from Peter, Ben advised that HVO would look at conducting weed spraying of galenia earlier than had been done in the past and were following this lead from Mangoola. Jeannie felt Glencore's environmental experience in relation to weed control would be a good resource, particularly around what methods work best.

Video Presentation; Deep ripping and topsoil placement at Cheshunt Rehabilitation.

Ben noted that the air seeder and drilling process is good for pasture and woodland where the landform is not steep. HVO have moved to a deep ripping process with surface drainage for steep landscapes, the benefits include keeping in the period of establishment, increased rainfall infiltration and slowing water travelling down a slope. These all contribute to reduced maintenance i.e. repairing erosion and deep ripping is suitable for woodlands areas. Ben noted that HVO were undergoing investigations and testing to support the ability to farm their own suitable rock for drainage in rehabilitation, this would be incorporated into the mining sequence and stockpiled separately.

Rehabilitation Seeding and Maintenance

HVO use drones for areas where they are not able to conduct tractor seeding. Drones had been used in rehabilitation for seeding approximately 9 hectares and for weed control. HVO have installed habitat features in rehabilitation. Continued weed control was targeting priority weeds. Peter noted some drones have the capability to carry up to 50 kilos which is good for steep areas. Ben agreed, confirming steep areas will be aerial seeded by drones or helicopters. Ben added that helicopters have the capability to get large areas done in a short period of time.

Biodiversity

HVO's on-site activity focus had been on weed management within the River Red Gum and Riparian areas, slashing grassland ahead of fire season and preparing to reduce weed load in areas planned for 2026 plantings. As part of grassland management, HVO had been identifying wombat burrows to improve safety and reduce equipment damage.

Within the offsets, the activity focus had been on fence management and access maintenance, removal of redundant internal fences, mapping required fence and track repairs and the repair of boundary fences. HVO has commenced an application to Kempsey Council for approval to repair the Crescent Head North entrance track following flood and fire damage.

Ben noted a milestone for the operation had been the finalisation and execution of the offset package under the Federal Approval. Conservation Agreements with the Commonwealth have been implemented that secures HVO's Commonwealth biodiversity offsets on title in perpetuity. HVO can now focus on the management of these offset areas.

Vertebrate Pest Management

Ben detailed the Spring 1080 baiting program and ongoing undertakings in relation to pig trapping. Current Programmes included; feral pig trapping, 1080 baiting co-ordinated with other Mines and Local Land Services (LLS), and the ongoing rural licensee feral pest bounty control. Kangaroo control was yet to commence and it was noted there was potential for a new chiller provider. Remaining 2025 activities include the potential to target pigs, wild dogs and foxes.

Heritage

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

The North annual and South biennial audits were completed during July 2025. The Care Agreement with Heritage NSW was to be updated in relation to the amalgamation of historic agreements and addition of recent West/Mitchell Pit salvaged artefacts. A Cultural Heritage Working Group (CHWG) Meeting had been undertaken in September 2025. Ben noted the main recommendation from Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) to come out of the CHWG Meeting was to improve HVO's current Artefact storage facility by making it more secure and modern. The Annual ACHMP compliance inspection had been scheduled for 18 November 2025.

Historic Homestead Projects

Archerfield Homestead followed by Carrington Stud are on a five-year repair schedule. Tenders had been received for both properties and HVO anticipated getting a body of work completed prior to year end. Chain of Ponds Inn, the Dog Leg Fence and Great Lodge are now part of an on-going schedule for vegetation maintenance. There will also be vegetation maintenance of fire trails.

Monitoring

Blast Monitoring; HVO identified the locations of blast monitoring units located at nearby privately owned residences that function as regulatory compliance monitors. No reportable exceedances had occurred during the reporting period (Q3 2025).

Air Quality Monitoring; HVO identified the locations of their extensive network of air quality monitoring equipment that is within and surrounding the operation. No reportable exceedances had occurred during the reporting period (Q3 2025). Ben noted that HVO had previously advised the CCC about a change in reporting. In the past for the North Consent the criteria was based on total impact, therefore whenever there was result over 50ug/m³ that required notification and an exceedance recording even though HVO may or may not have contributed. The North Consent is now similar to the South where there is an incremental criteria and only reported if analysis assesses the contribution over the 50ug/m³ to be from HVO.

Neville noted that summer is a period of the year where community tend to complain more about air quality. Neville acknowledged there are five mines in the Valley to the east of HVO and felt there had been high levels of dust in the air. Neville acknowledged monitoring for PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ and that criteria levels had been deemed acceptable. Neville would like to see the limits for PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ come down as in his view the current dust levels were not acceptable. Neville queried what is landing in depositional dust monitors and Ben noted when looking at total suspended particles there are a lot of sources that contribute.

Neville sees blasting as a source of dust and believed that stemming may be the problem. Neville asked if mines can eliminate how much dust is blasted into the air and how far it drifts. Ben confirmed that HVO conduct modelling and plan their blasts from a risk point of view in relation to dust and fume. Neville acknowledged the practices that mines have in place to reduce dust, he noted the Singleton Shire Healthy Environment Group (SSHEG) were focussed on stopping dust being put into the air, be this from blasting or overburden sites. Neville had wanted to bring to the group that there is something happening with dust in the air and this is not necessarily just the colour you see when driving into the Valley. Ben acknowledged Neville's feedback and confirmed he would take this on board.

Noise Monitoring; HVO identified the location of their real-time noise monitoring network. Monthly and quarterly attended monitoring is also conducted at night by a noise specialist. No reportable noise exceedances occurred during the reporting period (Q3 2025). HVO were replacing some real time sites that had reached their operational life with new noise compasses to ensure the system remains robust.

External Audit

Auditors from AECOM had been appointed by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI). HVO provided a summary of the external audit of their Environment & Community (E&C) Department, with the site inspection component being undertaken during the week commencing 13 October 2025. The audit scope included all NSW approvals, licences and management plans. HVO detailed areas inspected, personnel engaged with and operations witnessed. AECOM will examine the information provided by HVO and offer feedback, the final draft report was targeted for submission before year end 2025. When this report is finalised it will be available via HVO's website and provided to the CCC.

Exploration Works 2025; No exploration had been undertaken on Exploration Leases during 2025. All surface exploration was contained within Mining Leases. There was no surface exploration in Exploration Leases forecast for the remainder of 2025, however should this change, HVO will conduct consultation with impacted stakeholders and advise the CCC.

Community

There had been five complaints year to date; three concerns regarding blasting, one for noise that was in relation to a loading activity and dealt with by supervisors at the time, and one for dust in regard to truck trays. Ben noted the dust concern had been a good example to share with Production Crews about the visual aspect of dust. Dust is a big focus area for HVO, particularly as seasons move from cooler to warmer months, HVO continue to remind their employees to respond to both monitoring and visual triggers.

Community / Event Support

HVO sponsored the Motorcycle Chariots at the September Singleton Show. HVO employee Gareth Johnson had volunteered at Witmore's pop up food truck, HVO had provided a \$5,000 grant to aid the establishment of this earlier in 2025. A visit to the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service Belmont Base had been conducted in September. The Truck Tray Partnerships continue to support five Charities. HVO sponsored a hole at the Joe Slupik Golf Day held in October to support the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service. HVO provided in-kind donations of marquees for the Dungog Pedalfest held in September.

Community Contribution Summary

HVO detailed the organisations that had received community grants during 2025, with the annual contribution being in the order of \$152,000+ to date. Round Two Community Grants closed 30 September 2025 and HVO had received 23 applications. HVO's overall community contributions since 2018 included over 160 projects to the value of \$760,000+:

HVO continue to support Jerrys Plains School via a partnership arrangement. HVO sponsored a Parenting Teens Workshop "A Mental Health Tool Kit" held at Singleton Library in October 2025. Collet Smart presented this team workshop on mental health that armed participants with tools to assist young ones and teenagers with mental health issues.

Upcoming Community Events

Includes the announcement of HVO's Round 2 Community Grant recipients, St Catherine's Catholic College 'Country Fair'; in kind use of gazebos and the Young Business Mind Awards on 20 November 2025 at I2N Hub (Newcastle University), Honeysuckle.

Approvals

HVO Continuation Project

NSW Approvals Status

The Amendment Report (NSW EP&A Act) went on public exhibition for the period 5 to 25 September 2025. Submissions received were; 1097 in support, 83 as objections and 7 comments. Jason detailed the themes for supporting and objecting submissions. The next key steps were for HVO to prepare a submissions report to address all feedback that had been received, anticipated for Q4 2025. The NSW DPHI assessment period will follow and the DPHI will decide if the Continuation Project can be referred back to the NSW Independent Planning Commission (IPC) for assessment and determination.

Federal Approval Update

The next steps were for HVO to prepare PER's and submit the draft PER's for public exhibition. Thereafter there would be an assessment of the Continuation Project by the Independent Expert Scientific Committee (IESC) in relation to ecology and water resources. Followed by Federal DCCEEW assessment.

General feedback from the CCC was around the importance of the Continuation Project being progressed in a timely manner, given that the community, those associated with mining, and Council, need some form of certainty and commitment going forward. Members hoped the assessment would move through punctually given there are business plans that would need to be put in place and in consideration of the HVO North approval date out to 31 December 2026.

Neville added that he believed Historic Heritage and Cultural Heritage was of great interest to the community, therefore a good opportunity for HVO to connect and gain support by sharing knowledge.

8. Community Representative Feedback

Sue advised she had no community questions to put forward and wished HVO well with the Continuation Project's progression.

Todd confirmed he had experienced an increase in dust levels and sees a fair bit of dust from his location in the Maison Dieu area. Whether the source had been from HVO or Wambo, Todd described the dust as pretty atrocious of an afternoon and when the wind picks up. Due to the increase in dust Todd has had to increase hosing out the cartridge filters in his 9 x 4 pool to twice a week. Todd advised there had been a lot of rubbish coming out of the filter cartridge given the relatively small collection area of his pool. Ben confirmed that HVO continue to implement all reasonable and feasible dust controls and this is a focus point for all on site. Ben did appreciate and acknowledge feedback from neighbours in this regard.

Neville explained that there had been a review undertaken of the 200 year history of the Valley and when looking at archival records there seemed to be some confusion in relation to documentation around an "old Jerrys Plains" and "new Jerrys Plains". Neville is interested in conservation management but cannot find information for some properties however for example; there is one for Springwood. Neville felt there was some confusion within historic documents and was unsure what to do about this. Ben confirmed from a site point of view that Peter Bowman had put together HVO's Historic Heritage Management Plan containing a heritage register, historical information and management strategies. HVO's Historic Heritage Management Plan has been provided to the CCC and may assist Neville in terms of what HVO are doing to manage the sites that are within their control.

9. General Business

Hunter Transmission Project (HTP)

HVO provided mapping indicating the proposed HTP alignment and confirmed that HVO have been engaging with EnergyCo for a lengthy period to align projects and determine how they interact. It will be necessary to set up agreements for the HTP project to progress, identify how it will interact with HVO land i.e. its mining and rural land holders, and there were still a few matters to be worked through. EnergyCo had deliberately looked a mine owned lands to reduce impact on private landowners and National Parks.

Sue asked if HVO had discussed road intersections with EnergyCo, noting EnergyCo's intent to make some upgrades. Sue wanted to ensure upgrades and road realignments were well communicated to avoid any unnecessary number of changes. Ben confirmed EnergyCo are aware of HVO's proposed Continuation Project and in particular the potential Comleroi Road and Lemington Road realignment. HVO have provided a submission on the HTP Project regarding matters that are within HVO's sphere of influence but not the whole of Shire impact. Ben confirmed HVO and EnergyCo had been working through matters so as not to impact on each other's development plans and more recently in relation to EnergyCo's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Col closed the meeting, thanking all for their attendance.

10. Next Meeting Dates

Q2: 21 May 2026

Q3: 5 August 2026

Q4: 4 November 2026

Updates for 2026

- ✓ HVO Continuation Project
- ✓ HVO to outline the North Void Tailings Storage Facility Barrier Wall design when progressed

HVO CONTACTS

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

Continuation Project via hvo.com.au/continuation

Facebook [HVO Facebook](#)

Meeting Minutes - [Documents Hunter Valley Operations \(hvo.com.au\)](#)

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