



**Hunter Valley Operations (HVO)
Community Consultative Committee (CCC) Meeting
Wednesday 18 February 2026 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

Brenton Hubert

Superintendent Environment & Community

Jason Martin

Approvals Manager

Apologies

Janelle Wenham

Community Representative

Di Gee

Community Representative

Dave Foster

General Manager

Nic McLaughlin

Environment & Community Officer

Minutes

Sarah Purser

- 1. Welcome;** Col opened the meeting and welcomed members. Ben 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. Ben advised that Di has some forthcoming commitments on Wednesday's that may impact on her ability to attend some CCC Meetings. Ben confirmed that Di would like to remain as a Community Representative and had welcomed Di to provide any feedback in relation to the CCC to either himself or Nic. Ben confirmed Glencore Coal Australia's Chief Executive Officer; Ian Crib would be retiring and acknowledged Ian's 30 years of service to the company. Ben expressed his best wishes to Ian and extended a warm welcome to Peter Sharpe who will take over the role of Chief Executive Officer.

- 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 from Nic McLaughlin

- 2/2/26 Invitation for CCC members to attend HVO community information session as part of Jerrys Plains Fair.
- 5/2/26 Invitation for CCC members, including Agenda and Business Papers, to attend this meeting.
- 12/2/26 2025 HVO CCC Annual Report sent to Chair for submission to Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI).

5. Confirmation of the previous Meeting's Minutes

Col called for formal approval of the Minutes for the Meeting held 5 November 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/HunterValleyOperations)

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 previous advice to the CCC that the last elements of ground water modelling were complete. Ben advised when the tender process for these works is finalised, HVO could provide more detail to the CCC on what the barrier wall construction will look like, confirming this will be located above Carrington Billabong.

Peter queried future storage of tailings and Ben identified the proposed area via mapping pending approval of the Continuation Project. Peter was pleased the planned location was a greater distance from the river. Peter asked if HVO can harvest water from tailings and bring that back into their system. Ben confirmed that is HVO's intention via the use of transfer pumps. Peter thanked Ben for responding to his enquiries.

7. Company Reports | Update on Hunter Valley Operations

Operations Update

West Pit (North)

Ben noted West Pit is situated across the other side of Lemington Road in relation to the HVO site. Ben identified the direction of mining via aerial mapping which was progressing in a north west orientation following the Lemington road alignment. The majority of HVO's mining fleet was in the northern area of West Pit. Ben noted that over time mining will incorporate the Wilton Pit and ultimately link with the Mitchell Pit, allowing the mining to widen out to a more normal strips orientation as opposed to the the shorter terrace arrangement that was currently utilised. HVO would continue to back fill as mining progressed.

Peter queried the use of hessian on the mesh fencing surrounding the mining areas, this was not a negative comment, his interest was if this is to screen the pit. Ben confirmed that is correct, there is a requirement for HVO to provide general screening. Peter felt the height of the fencing was good from a safety point of view and Jeanie noted a requirement under legislation is to have this in place around mining operations.

Mitchell Pit (North)

Ben identified where the mine progression was proposed to move in a south-westerly direction, this was anticipated for mid 2026. Peter queried what HVO will do when they reach the river flats and how the alluvial soil would be handled. Ben confirmed there were requirements under approvals to ensure that materials are selectively handled and the profile is replaced. Peter acknowledged the beautiful soil on the flats, noting the river used to run under the hill. Ben confirmed this is known as the Carrington West Wing area.

Ben confirmed that HVO were collecting their own rock to be used for drainage, noting there are specifications in place to ensure the right type of rock is utilised.

Cheshunt (South)

The coal and waste sequence had continued in an easterly direction as previously reported to the CCC. The plan remains for HVO to mine back into the Riverview Pit, this will involve removing the material placed there to access the lower seams. In response to a query from Peter, Ben confirmed that inrush risk from water seepage from the adjacent Riverview West void was being managed as required, noting there had not been anything out of the ordinary recorded in relation to increased water flow.

As part of the operations update Ben confirmed that HVO had hit all their targets, metrics and budgets in 2025. Ben noted this was an extremely positive outcome and marked a milestone for the Joint Venture. Community representatives commended HVO on these results and there was a general agreement that managing mining operations can be very weather dependent. Ben provided an overview of production forecasts for the forthcoming years.

Environment

Comparative Rainfall: 2024 to January 2026

HVO provided monthly and cumulative rainfall as a comparison for 2024, 2025 and 2026. Ben noted there had been 70ml of rain as a result of storms in January 2026 and there has been talk around a El Nino pattern occurring midyear, bringing a drier phase.

Comparative Rainfall: 2013 to 2025

HVO presented annual rainfall data for this period that indicated the average total was in the order of 660ml.

Rehabilitation 2025

During 2025 HVO met its rehabilitation target of 55.6 hectares of new rehabilitation. Ben confirmed that there had been positive germination results and that Brian and Neville had gone out to look at rehabilitation following on from the November 2025 meeting. Despite deep ripping Ben noted that storms had created a bit of rilling that HVO will repair. HVO provided an aerial view of the 2025 completed Cheshunt rehabilitation and identified 2025's growth medium development (GMD) and rehabilitation areas via mapping.

Rehabilitation Seeding and Maintenance during 2025

HVO had installed over 2,000m of rock drains across 13 separate drains. Habitat features had been installed in rehabilitation areas. HVO continued to target priority weeds as part of their weed control. Infill planting had been completed in woodland blocks.

Ben spoke positively about the 52 steers that had been placed in the Cyrus Paddock rehabilitation for six months, having gained in the order of .8 kilograms a day. Running cattle continues to demonstrate the successful post mining use of land for grazing and there are also benefits in terms of maintenance of weeds.

Rehabilitation 2026

HVO has a 2026 rehabilitation target of 11.9 hectares of new rehabilitation and as such will have an increased focus on maintenance tasks throughout the year, particularly in relation to rehabilitation management for weeds. Ben explained the sequences that need to be undertaken to build landforms up to height to enable more land to be released for rehabilitation. Once bulk shaping and deep ripping is completed HVO are then able to commence seeding, this may be in the form of drill or air seeding with the capability to also utilise drones. Ben noted there are also some older drop structures that will be repaired and upgraded. There was a general discussion around problematic weeds, Coolatai grass, galenia and mixed woody weeds were mentioned. HVO identified the planned rehabilitation for 2026 via mapping.

Biodiversity

Weed management occurred throughout 2025 across remnant vegetation and riparian areas based on annual and biannual monitoring results.

Areas of focus had included; reducing weed coverage and pig habitat within riparian areas i.e. billabong and river frontages not just on the mine site but also at offsets. HVO intend to slash grasslands ahead of the fire season and were preparing to reduce the weed load in areas planned for 2026 plantings. Infill planting was planned for River Red Gum (RRG) areas.

During 2025, approximately 234 hectares of land were managed for weeds at HVO and 90 hectares within their offset properties. Ben noted that in 2026 HVO will take an altered approach with two companies being engaged to target weeds, this investment will enable weed crews to work and focus on different areas. Peter queried if HVO conduct weed control along the river corridor and Ben confirmed that HVO monitor and do programs on riparian areas. Peter noted a prevalence of green cestrum and Ben confirmed that when HVO identify a weed, such as cestrum, they then include in the program.

HVO identified weed management areas within HVO buffer properties and Wandewoi offset via aerial mapping.

Biodiversity - Offsets

HVO provided monitoring results of the Hook offset targeted African Olive removal for the period 2020 to 2025 via aerial mapping.

EPBC approvals for the biodiversity offsets were finalised in January 2026, with the receipt of the signed Conservation Agreements between HVO and the Federal Government.

The priority focus areas planned for 2026 at each offset will be:-

Wandewoi; boundary fence installation.

Hook; ongoing weed management.

Condon View; weed management and restoration works.

Mitchelhill; Boundary fence repairs and ongoing weed management.

Crescent Head; access track repair and fence replacement.

Vertebrate Pest Management

Current programs included; pig trapping to be undertaken in riparian areas commencing March 2026. The HVO rural licensee feral pest bounty program is ongoing.

HVO provided a summary of Vertebrate Pest Control for 2023, 2024 and 2025. Ben noted that pig control numbers were not just at HVO but also via a bounty program with landholders. Ben asked members what feral pests they had been seeing and the general response was that there had been a number of pigs and dogs. Peter noted that pigs and dogs are likely to be found in the same location.

Proposed 2026 activities included; further pig trapping based upon sightings and potential for "Hoggone" pig baiting. Wild dog and fox control efforts are conducted in conjunction with the Hunter Local Lands Service and surrounding mines. Kangaroo control was yet to commence.

Heritage

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

All commitments for 2025 had been completed, including the Mitchell Pit South AHIP.

The 2026 schedule includes:-

North annual and South biennial audits; to be conducted with the first one scheduled for April 2026.

Installation of CM-CD1 buffer fence; Ben noted this to be the most culturally significant site that HVO manage with the archaeological material within the colluvial units at depth considered late Pleistocene or early Holocene.

Sorting of returned 'Kuske' artefacts; HVO will spend a few days with RAPs to re-familiarise all with these artefacts and update recorded information.

Care Agreement; an amalgamation of all historic agreements.

Annual Cultural Heritage Working Group (CHWG) Meeting; anticipated for November 2026.

Artefact Storage Facility; HVO intend to purchase a shipping container to provide an improved, more secure and separate area for artefacts. Ben noted there is also a collection of artefacts displayed in the front office of HVO's main building. Sue queried the potential to store artefacts at the Minimbah Teaching Place and Ben confirmed the RAPs preference was to have them stored on the HVO site. Neville felt the community would be most interested in knowing what has been collected in terms of artefacts.

Historic Homestead Projects

Historic Heritage

Archerfield homestead; upgrade works were to commence in February 2026.

Carrington Stud homestead; works scheduled to commence March 2026.

Chain of Ponds Inn; there will be an assessment and repairs to the stable roof after this was partly dislodged during a windstorm in December 2025. HVO will update the Conservation Management Plan accordingly.

There continues to be on-going vegetation maintenance and pest monitoring.

The Great Lodge; HVO provided a pictorial overview of this c1830's timber slab hut, noting a significance assessment was scheduled to be undertaken in March 2026. Ben asked if Neville had any questions and Neville responded he had found it interesting that there had been grounds maintenance conducted around the Great Lodge. Neville felt the Great Lodge was on par with Wambo in terms of being the oldest heritage sites. Ben acknowledged Neville's interest in Heritage and will keep the CCC briefed on each stage of the works. Ben suggested that it may be possible for the CCC to go for a visit out there.

Summary of Monitoring Results - Q4 1025

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.

Air Quality Monitoring; HVO identified the locations of their network of air quality monitoring equipment that is within and surrounding the operation. No reportable exceedances had occurred during the reporting period. Ben confirmed there had been an air quality data miscapture due to a mains power outage that had been reset and checked.

Noise Monitoring; HVO identified the locations of their network of real-time noise monitors located around the perimeter of HVO at locations representative to nearby neighbouring communities. Monthly and quarterly attended monitoring is also conducted at night by a noise specialist at various locations surrounding the operations. No reportable exceedances had occurred during the reporting period.

External Audit

HVO provided the outcomes from an External audit conducted by AECOM, who had been appointed by the DPHI, of the Environment & Community (E&C) Department. The full report and responses to recommendation are available on HVO's website. HVO provided a summary of the audit findings, Ben noted that HVO had generally performed well and was recognised to have good Environmental Management Systems in place.

Exploration Works 2025; No exploration had been undertaken on Exploration Licences during 2025. All surface exploration had been contained within Mining Leases. There was currently no surface exploration planned in Exploration Licences for 2026, however should this change, HVO will conduct consultation with impacted stakeholders.

Community

Complaints; There had been a total of six complaints in 2025 and no complaints to date in 2026.

Jerrys Plains Public School

HVO's partnership with Jerrys Plains Public School will continue during 2026 including assistance for; a Teachers Aid as classroom support for the full school year and new playground equipment. Ben noted that the School had been fund raising for a number of years for a new playground and the quotes in 2025 had been very expensive. HVO decided to step in and provide the remaining funding to enable the School to get that project off the ground and make sure the School has all they need. Ben noted there had been a very emotional positive response at the end of year School presentation where HVO's General Manager Dave Foster had announced that HVO will be providing this assistance for the playground.

Grants

HVO had provided support to; Singleton Netball Association, Cessnock Piranhas (Cricket), Valley Postie Bike Challenge and Knees in the Breeze Charity Ride (suicide prevention).

Truck Tray Partnership

HVO will continue these donations in 2026. \$0.60 per load for each of five painted trucks had resulted in \$7,000 being provided to; Singleton Family Support, Hunter Prostate Cancer Alliance, Hunter Breast Cancer Foundation, Type 1 Foundations and the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service.

Information Session

This was held at Jerrys Plains Fair on 14 February 2026, Ben acknowledged that Sue and Brian had attended. Ben felt there had been more people come for a chat than in subsequent years, not just about the Continuation Project, but also around a raft of things such as employment.

Upcoming Events

Round 1 Community Grants will be open from 1 to 30 April 2026. HVO also intended to hold a Maison Dieu Community Information Day. Community Newsletter scheduled for March 2026.

2026 First Nations Pathways Program

HVO confirmed that applications for this program were open, the aim is to enable participants to develop skills in the mining industry. Ben detailed eligibility and asked members if they know someone that may be interested to refer them to HVO.

2027 GCAA Graduate Programme

Applications had opened for this program that closes on 27 April 2026. Members were again encouraged to refer anyone with an interest to HVO.

Sue enquired about eligibility and Brenton added that HVO also have Vacation Student positions for those that are studying. Ben recommended that if family or friends are interested to direct them to HVO's careers website.

Approvals

HVO Continuation Project

HVO provided an update in relation to NSW and Federal Approvals. The next key steps for NSW Approval being; NSW DPHI Assessment period followed by the NSW Independent Planning Commission (IPC) assessment and determination. The next key steps for Federal Approval being; preparation of Public Environmental Reports (PERs), submission of draft PERs for public exhibition and update followed by an assessment by the Federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW).

HVO provided a step through of works undertaken and the approvals process over the course of the Continuation Project since inception. At the time of this meeting, the project had reached NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) assessment stage.

8. Community Representative Feedback

Peter wished HVO the best of luck with the Continuation Project and Col congratulated the company on their efforts.

Jeannie thanked HVO for the Continuation Project updates, confirming that this detail is what people are wanting to know. Jason confirmed there had been many discussions with various stakeholders and HVO have made an effort to communicate about the Continuation Project to keep information updated and relevant.

Neville was pleased with all that had been shared at this meeting and found it interesting to learn what has been going on.

9. General Business

No General business put forward

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

Actioned Post Meeting

Circulated to members on 6 March 2026 by Nic:-

- ✓ Invitation to HVO's Community Information Session on 13 March 2026 at Maison Dieu.
- ✓ Email via Col Gellatly, HVO Chairperson; Correspondence from NSW Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) providing an update on Community Consultative Committees.

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)

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