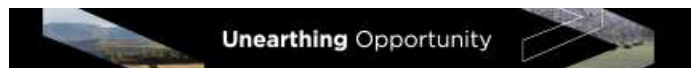




**Hunter Valley Operations (HVO)**  
**Community Consultative Committee (CCC) Meeting**  
**Thursday 21 May 2026 at 9.30 a.m.**



**Attendance**

**Chairperson**

Dr. Colin Gellatly

Independent Chair

**Community Representatives**

Brian Atfield

Community Representative

Jeanie Hayes

Community Representative

Di Gee

Community Representative

Peter Nichols

Community Representative

**Singleton Council Representative**

Cr. Sue George

Singleton Council

**Company Representatives**

Dave Foster

General Manager

Ben De Somer

Manager Environment & Community

Nic McLaughlin

Environment & Community Officer

Jason Martin

Approvals Manager

**Apologies**

Janelle Wenham

Community Representative

Michael Wellard

Community Representative

Neville Hodgkinson

Community Representative

Todd Mills

Community Representative

**Minutes**

Sarah Purser

- 1. Welcome;** Col opened the meeting and welcomed members. 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.

**HVO Terms of Reference (ToR) Update;** Nic detailed updates that had been made to the HVO ToR and these were confirmed by members.

**Individual Declarations of Pecuniary Interest Forms;** HVO provided examples pecuniary interest, or other interests, and advised these forms need to be updated on a regular basis. Nic provided attendees with hard copies for completion at meeting close.

**Actioned Post Meeting;** 21/5/26; Nic emailed the Declaration of Interest Forms to the apologies for today's meeting for completion and return.

#### 4. Correspondence to members

- 6/3/26 Invitation to HVO's Community Information Session held on 13 March 2026 at Maison Dieu. Correspondence from the Department of Planning, Housing & Infrastructure (DPHI) via the Chair.
- 19/3/26 Draft February Meeting Minutes for member review.
- 31/3/26 Link to HVO's 2025 Annual Review
- 8/5/26; Invitation for CCC members, including Agenda and Business Papers, to attend this meeting.

#### 5. Confirmation of the previous Meeting's Minutes

Col called for formal approval of the Minutes for the Meeting held 18 February 2026. 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 progress of the North Void Tailings Storage Facility Barrier Wall.**

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

Ben advised there will be two stages for this project, one being the barrier wall, the second will be improvements to the levy, and the purpose is to create a groundwater barrier to water movement. The works tender process had been completed and HVO were in the process of finalising the construction contract.

#### 7. Company Reports | Update on Hunter Valley Operations

##### Operations Update

##### West Pit (North)

HVO identified the proposed location for the Tailings Storage Facility (TSF) within a void in the northern corner of West Pit (pending HVCOP approval). Mining as per plan in West Pit with HVO continuing to progress terrace sequence in a south-westerly direction adjacent to Lemington Rd towards the previously mined Wilton Pit.

##### Mitchell Pit (North)

Mining continues to progress in a South-Easterly direction towards Lemington Rd. As the year progresses it is expected that intensity would increase with 2 digging units operating. Peter queried the approved mining footprint under HVO's current approval and Ben identified this area via mapping displayed.

##### Cheshunt (South)

HVO identified the locations of Pit 1 to the west, and Pit 2 to the east within Cheshunt mining area. Jeannie queried if HVO were still digging in Cheshunt. In response, Dave identified the location where diggers were at depth confirming they will continue at that depth in a westerly direction. Peter queried mining in Pit 1 progressing into adjacent Riverview Pit and Dave identified where HVO had taken the first few passes. Dave anticipated that mining would finish in Pit 2 approximately mid 2027.

## **Environment**

### **Comparative Rainfall: 2024 to April 2026**

HVO presented monthly and cumulative rainfall as a comparison for 2024, 2025, and January to April 2026.

### **Comparative Rainfall: 2013 to April 2026**

YTD rainfall in 2026 had been lower than the annual average of 660mm.

### **Monthly Rainfall 2026**

January to April 2026 had been drier compared to the previous few years.

## **Rehabilitation**

HVO has a 2026 rehabilitation target of 11.9 hectares of new rehabilitation and as such will have an increased focus on maintenance tasks. Ben explained that HVO has had a transition in the way final landforms are being built with the implementation of the Geofluv design which has influenced the timing of when land becomes available i.e. at final height and ready for shaping. .

Peter queried if HVO use hydroseed and Ben responded that in general is not the primary rehabilitation method but may be preferred method for steeper areas requiring rapid stabilisation. Ben also confirmed that aerial seeding is conducted bi-annually for temporary stabilisation, with the next round scheduled for the end of June 2026.

### **Rehabilitation - Maintenance**

HVO's focus on rehabilitation works in 2026 will include; maintenance works on the Cheshunt drop structure, installation of nest boxes, continued weed control targeting priority weeds, topsoil stockpile maintenance, infill planting and over-sowing of ~25 hectares of pasture rehabilitation block in Cheshunt via drone.

Peter asked if the drones were effective and does HVO use planes to spread seed. Ben responded that HVO tend to use drones for different types of seeding on smaller land parcels though aerial seeding via plane may be suitable for larger or steeper footprints.

## **Biodiversity**

### **Weed Management**

HVO completed a River Red Gum (RRG) inspection early May 2026. The Remnant Veg Zone inspection is scheduled for early June 2026. Infill plating for RRG areas were planned for August 2026. As of end Q1 2026 HVO had completed ~243 hectares of weed control. Fencing works are to be completed in July 2026 across RRG priority areas. HVO identified the Q1 2026 weed management areas within the Remnant Vegetation Zones, RRG's and Rehab via mapping.

Brian noted the prevalence of Tiger Pear weed, it was acknowledged these had become more visible due to lower ground cover and therefore easier to see and spray.

## **Biodiversity - Offsets**

Offset management had focused on; boundary and track slashing, and weed management for planned rehabilitation areas at Wandewoi, Hook and Mitchellhill West

### *Mitchellhill West*

HVO were getting some older boundary fencing replaced given there is a general requirement in offset areas to ensure they are secured.

### *Crescent Head*

HVO had put in a Section 138 application seeking approval to conduct repair work on access tracks that were damaged in flooding as these are Council Roads.

## **Vertebrate Pest Management**

### **Current programs included:-**

1080 baiting and the Local Land Services; Interagency Field Day and Pest Managers Annual Meeting. Peter queried the outcome on wild dog control and Ben noted there had been plenty of sightings around site. Ben advised the baits had only been put out the previous week with a good number of takes and Peter was positive about that result. Peter noted he had seen a very big mob of pigs, Ben had also seen a herd when travelling to work and confirmed 53 pigs had been controlled YTD. HVO will conduct their pig program after dog baiting so as not to provide a food source. Di added that she had seen a very large deer on the flats at her property. Peter queried kangaroo control and Ben confirmed a commercial option had become available enabling HVO to re-commence that program. Peter felt that was timely in relation to crops coming up.

### **Proposed 2026 activities include:-**

Pig trapping based upon sightings, wild dog and fox programme in conjunction with Local Land Services and surrounding mines, and commercial kangaroo harvest. HVO's rural licensee feral pest bounty program remains ongoing.

## **Heritage - Aboriginal**

### **Aboriginal Cultural Heritage**

*South biennial Compliance Audit*; Had been undertaken during April 2026.

*'Kuske' artefacts*; These were returned to HVO with 100% of approximately 7,000 artefacts sorted and accounted for, with assistance from HVO's Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAP's) and Archaeologist; Joel Deacon.

*Care & Control Agreement*; An amalgamation of all historic agreements is to be confirmed, the goal is to have all the artefact collections that HVO have stored in one area on site.

*2026 Singleton NAIDOC Awards and Cessnock NAIDOC*; HVO provided support to these events.

Ben noted there had been one non-compliance that had been reported to the CCC in the Meeting Business Papers in relation to the CM-CD1 site, subsequently signage had been re-erected and a 20m buffer fence installed. HVO had notified the DPHI during progress and completion of these works. Ben noted that at all times the site had remained well protected.

## Heritage - Historic

Wandewoi, Archerfield and Carrington Homestead upgrade works continue as multi-year projects based on a risk approach. Baseline condition, CMP (Archerfield) and scoping was completed in 2023 / 2024. Wandewoi 'Year 1' works were completed in 2025. 'Year 1' works for Archerfield and Carrington were nearing completion.

### Pictorial Presentation - Archerfield and Carrington Homesteads - Year 1 Refurbishment Works

HVO presented a pictorial overview of 'Year 1' works that were nearing completion at Archerfield and Carrington Homesteads.

Before, works progress, and after photos were provided for:-

*Archerfield*; Dairy bails, Tank stand, Distillery doors, windows and window grills, Stable roof and cladding, Homestead kitchen and laundry, Homestead courtyard.

*Carrington*; Balustrade and nosing board, Decking, and the Stable.

Peter was impressed that the floor tiles had been matched in the Archerfield kitchen and laundry. Ben confirmed the proposed conservation was like for like i.e. to use similar materials. Members collectively commended HVO on how good these works looked, Brian spoke highly of the Carrington Stud in particular.

Sue asked if details of the refurbishment works HVO had undertaken could be shared with the Heritage Management Committee at Singleton Council.

**Actioned Post Meeting;** 21/5/26; Nic shared the Heritage Slides from today's meeting presentation to Sue, Di and Neville.

*Chain of Ponds Inn*; HVO advised that assessment and repair of the stable roof was under investigation. HVO were awaiting an inspection report with works being dependent upon structural integrity.

**Significance Assessments;** Reference was made to HVO's Historic Management Plan that had been circulated to the CCC on 1 July 2025. One of the first steps in this report is to conduct significance assessments and these have been undertaken for; Great Lodge, Greenleek Homestead, Tennis Court Homestead and the Orchard Homestead.

### Summary of Monitoring Results - Q1 2026

There had been no reportable exceedances in relation to blasting and air quality during the reporting period. Ben noted there had been one air quality data mis-capture at Long Point that had been due to a suspected power outage. There was however one (1) noise exceedance at Knodlers Lane which occurred during the reporting period (Q1 2026). HVO South generated a site only LAeq of 41 dB and LA1,1min of 48 dB against the HVO South criterion of 40dB and 45 dB respectively. In response to an alert to HVO's Despatch from their noise consultant regarding an exceedance at Knodlers Lane, HVO investigated and verified the issue was in relation to trucks working at height. HVO shut down these trucks, relocated them with the follow-up noise reading below noise criterion. Ben explained HVO's process is to; identify a non-compliance, investigate, make operational changes and re-monitor, Peter responded that is good.

**Exploration Works 2026;** There is no surface exploration planned in Exploration Licences during 2026. If this changes, HVO will conduct consultation with impacted stakeholders. All surface exploration continues to be located within existing Mining Leases.

## Community

**Complaints;** Four complaints recorded YTD 2026. One complaint was received in relation to traffic interaction at the corner of the Golden Highway and Comleroi Road. Ben noted that HVO continues to provide the site workforce communications education around driving appropriately. HVO also received three separate complaints regarding blast overpressure event in April from Jerrys Plains, Camberwell and Bridgeman. Ben confirmed the monitoring network indicated compliance, however he noted that meteorological conditions can affect overpressure levels at various locations and HVO manage this to the best of their ability via blast design and pre-blast meteorological assessment.

In relation to blasting impacts, Ben felt there had been some frustration within the community when concerns are raised and HVO respond that monitoring results are compliant. Ben explained that being compliant means HVO are below a threshold that is accepted to protect structures and preserve amenity. This is a key message that HVO would like to get across more effectively moving forward and encouraged CCC representatives to clarify this if they are contacted or out talking with the community.

**Community Grants; Round 1 2026;** HVO had received 35 applications, seeking a total of \$218,264. There had been a broad range of applications across arts, sports and community projects from Singleton, Muswellbrook, Cessnock, Maitland, Upper Hunter LGAs as well as a regional scope. HVO were assessing the applications and anticipated announcing the successful recipients by end May 2026.

**Glencore First Nations Pathway Program NSW;** Nic confirmed the CCC had been notified regarding applications being open for this program and confirmed the successful applicants for NSW.

**HVO Partnerships Update;** Jerrys Plains Public School; new playground equipment.

## Community Activities, Support & Offerings

- HVO Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue (UHMD); Tour.
- Singleton Community Garden; Tech Services.
- Business Singleton Breakfast; HVO Continuation Project Presentation by Dave Foster.
- Group 21 Rugby League; Support for uniforms, training and mentoring.
- Witmore Disability Support Services; Tour of the north admin area and viewing of heavy machinery being washed. Nic noted that Witmore had been very thankful to HVO for accommodating their needs.
- UHMD Jerrys Plains and Milbrodale Schools; Tour to view mining, along with a visit to the workshop and despatch room.
- NRL Voice for Mining at McDonald Jones Stadium. Nic noted this had been a very successful event with offerings including an excavator simulator for children to go on and HVO merchandise giveaways. A QR Code for HVO's Continuation Project had received approximately 1,000 signatures of support.

**Truck Tray Partnership;** HVO have extended their truck tray partnerships for an additional three years, with donations going to; Singleton Family Support, Hunter Prostate Cancer Alliance, Hunter Breast Cancer Foundation, Type 1 Foundations and Westpac Helicopter Service.

**Singleton Family Support;** HVO funding will be used to assist with community education and capacity building events such as Network Your Wellbeing, providing debriefings for community support staff.

**Community Information Session;** was held at Maison Dieu on 13 March 2026.

*For member information;* HVO advised that AGL had submitted their 'response to submissions' on their Maison Dieu Solar Farm ('Development of a 60MW Solar Farm with Energy Storage and Associated Infrastructure').

Further information can be found on the Planning Portal at:

<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/maison-dieu-solar-farm>

Dave asked if the EnergyCo power line had been discussed and Jeannie confirmed the CCC had been briefed at a previous meeting. There was a general discussion around the proposed power line location and Ben provided an overview on how this would tie in with HVO's various landholdings, and the associated activities it would interact with.

## **Approvals**

### **HVO Continuation Project**

#### **NSW Approval**

*Current Status;* HVO had responded to RFI's to address final agency advice or to inform DPHI's Assessment Report. Stakeholder engagement had continued. *The Key Next Steps include;* DPHI completing their Assessment Report, including recommended conditions of consent, followed by referral of the Project to the IPC for determination. The IPC Phase was anticipated to be for a duration of approximately 12 weeks with steps anticipated to include; public submission process, various meetings, a site inspection, public hearing/meeting, leading to determination.

#### **Federal Approval**

*Current Status;* Draft Public Environmental Report (PER's) had been prepared with HVO receiving approval to publish the draft PER's in April 2026. The public exhibition period will extend from 5 May to 17 June 2026. Notifications of the exhibition details of the Draft PERs for HVO North and South were advertised in local, state and national newspapers. *Key next steps include;* Review of submissions received following completion of public exhibition period, finalisation of PERs for submission to DCCEEW, publication of final PERs, followed by Federal DCCEEW assessment and determination. HVO provided instructions on how to view the draft Public Environment Reports, including their availability on the HVO Websites, and noting hard copies had been made available at Singleton Library, Muswellbrook Library and NSW State Library. HVO offered to provide a hard copy of the draft PER to the CCC on request.

## **8. Community Representative Feedback**

Jeannie noted the importance of a decision being made on the Continuation Project to allow HVO time for planning.

## **9. General Business**

Col wished HVO good luck over the forthcoming months. Col closed the meeting thanking all for their attendance.

## **10. Next Meeting Dates**

Q3: 3 September 2026 | Q4: 4 November 2026

### **Updates for 2026**

- ✓ HVO Continuation Project
- ✓ North Void Tailings Storage Facility Barrier Wall progress.

### **HVO CONTACTS**

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

Continuation Project via [hvo.com.au/continuation](https://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