

2011 Community Forum

Coal Mining & the Community: *Setting the agenda*

Friday 20 May 2011

Singleton Senior Citizens Centre, Bathurst Street, Singleton

Preliminary Program

Introduction

- 09.00 Registration and morning tea
- 09.30 Introduction to day
(Chairperson)
- 09.40 Welcome – George Souris MP,
Member for Upper Hunter
(invited)

Forum – Community perspectives

- 9.50 Community group snapshots of
issues
- 10.50 *Morning tea*

Keynote address

- 11.10 - 11.30 Chris Hartcher MP,
Minister for Resources and
Energy (invited)

Presentations

- 11.30 Ideas for NSW coal policies
- 11.50 Mining governance
- 12.00 Exploration & approvals
- 12.10 Mine operations & rehabilitation
- 12.20 Discussion and wrap up
- 12.30 *Lunch (provided)*

Workshops – Policy framework for mining

- 1.30 Concurrent afternoon
workshop sessions
 - 1 Governance
 - 2 Exploration & approvals
 - 3 Mine operations & rehabilitation
- 3.00 *Afternoon Tea*

Future directions

- 3.20 Review of workshop sessions
and policies
- 3.40 General discussion and
resolutions
- 4.00 Finish

About the forum

The Hunter Environment Lobby is presenting a forum to discuss coal mining and the community. Expansion of coal mining is rapid in many parts of NSW resulting in adverse impacts for communities and the environment.

A coal and gas strategy is currently under consideration by the NSW Government. The forum provides an opportunity to consider future directions for coal mining, and how impacts on the community can be identified and effectively responded to. The forum will consider coal issues across NSW, but not coal seam gas exploration and extraction.

The forum is for community groups to set an agenda. Its main purpose is to develop policy ideas and to build strategic directions for the future. The forum seeks to:

- provide an opportunity for community groups to outline their concerns about coal mining impacts.
- develop specific proposals for groups and policy for the NSW Government to implement.
- promote better understanding and mutual support between community groups.

Questions to be discussed include:

- 1 Is mining legislation out of date? What requirements should apply to mine approvals under planning laws?
- 2 How does the NSW Government manage conflicts of interest when receiving exploration licence payments, determining development approvals, and receiving royalty payments?
- 3 What rights should mining companies have to explore on private land?
- 4 How should mines compensate for irreversible environmental impacts on groundwater, surface water, biodiversity, and land use?
- 5 What are the links between dust emissions from coal mining and community health?
- 6 Is mine rehabilitation effective, and who controls it?

The forum will assist local community group efforts to effectively respond to the threats posed by many coal mining proposals. While Hunter Environment Lobby is co-ordinating the forum, it does not intend to speak on behalf of other groups.



Supported by
Hunter Environment Lobby Inc

Who should attend?

The forum is primarily for interested community members and representatives of groups who are affected by coal mining impacts.

Staff from local government, state agencies and mining companies will also benefit from understanding community concerns and the policies and actions required for the future.

How you can contribute

The forum will be useful to you in the following ways:

- Recognising the political and administrative context for local actions
- Providing up to date understanding of current events
- Meeting people with similar interests and issues
- Promoting your group or issue

Groups are urged to make a short presentation to the forum outlining their issues, activities and policy proposals.

About the Hunter Environment Lobby

The Hunter Environment Lobby Inc (HEL) is a non profit community group established to promote environment protection in the Hunter Valley. It has been in existence for over 15 years and has organised a number of successful public workshops. HEL receives no government funding.

HEL has been actively involved in coal mining issues, and has made many submissions to development proposals. It prepared the Hunter Regional Environmental Action Plan in 1995.

Forum location

Singleton Senior Citizen's Centre, Bathurst St, Singleton. It is located in the centre of the business area of Singleton, and about 1km from Singleton Railway Station.

Further inquiries

Contact HEL: helforum.2011@gmail.com or 4936 6260

Background

Under the former NSW Government, coal mining was effectively out of control. Effective policies and governance is needed to properly assess and regulate the industry.

Policy ideas for coal mining and related activities have been prepared by the Hunter Environment Lobby for discussion at the forum. These ideas relate to key concerns including:

- Complex, fragmented regulatory frameworks
- Mining threats to other land uses (eg agriculture, and natural ecosystems)
- Long term issues are ignored at the expense of short term profit
- Repeated failures in compliance with approval conditions
- Failure to consider cumulative environmental effects (eg air quality)
- Disregard for water management planning
- Centralised decision-making, with disempowerment of local government
- Mining income is extracted from regional areas
- Inadequate investment in local infrastructure and communities
- Failure to consider or plan for biodiversity

Setting the agenda

Workshop sessions are proposed to consider policy ideas and future directions for:

- 1 **Governance** – including the complexity of legislation, rights and responsibilities associated with the grant of mining titles, and corporate and company financial responsibilities.
- 2 **Exploration & approvals** – including how these controversial processes can be improved, and how irreversible impacts on water and biodiversity can be avoided.
- 3 **Mine operations & rehabilitation** – including enforcement of approval conditions, managing air quality, and what happens after mining is completed.

REGISTRATION FORM

Coal Mining & the Community Forum 2011

Please fill in your details and return to Hunter Environment Lobby Inc. ABN: 75402384547

\$25 Individuals (concession \$15)

\$120 Government agencies, companies, etc

Name

Organisation

Postal address

Phone

Email

Registration Fee (enclosed): \$ _____ (Note: this registration forms an official tax invoice. Hunter Environment Lobby is not registered for GST)

Please forward your registration form and payment by Monday 16 May 2011 to:

Hunter Environment Lobby, PO Box 188 East Maitland 2323 or email registration form or details to helforum.2011@gmail.com

Payment options:

CHEQUE: Payable to Hunter Environment Lobby Inc.

DIRECT DEPOSIT: Account name: HEL Inc

Bank: Newcastle Permanent Building Society

BSB: 650-000 A/C 971258303

Transport

Infrequent trains operate between Newcastle and Singleton. Check trackwork timetable for 20 May 2011.

If you intend driving, would you have a spare seat to give someone else a lift? Yes / No