

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

# **SUSTAINABLE MINING NEEDS TO EMBRACE COMMUNITY CONCERNS**

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Sustaining a world class mining industry in the Hunter Valley involves the continued evaluation of the full environmental, social and economic costs and benefits of developments to the region and to the State.

NSWMC Chief Executive, Dr Nikki Williams, said members of the community witness the ever-changing landscape of the Hunter Valley and are justifiably concerned about the impact this may have on their local environment.

The NSW Minerals Council acknowledges the fear arising from uncertainty surrounding the future impacts of new mining developments. These fears need to be allayed through a full and frank assessment process, effective communication of the findings of this process and demonstrated action to minimise risk.

"Mining comes with specific responsibilities which are taken seriously by the industry and by the State Government that regulates this activity," Dr Williams said. "The mining companies are committed and required to protecting communities, environmental resources and ecological systems through rigorous planning and effective remediation."

The effect of ongoing world class mine rehabilitation and the nature of mine expansions mean the size of the active disturbance from mining in the Hunter Valley is unlikely to increase significantly as mining output increases. But the rate of landscape and biodiversity rehabilitation will advance.

"Coal mining is part and parcel of the region – its landscape, its people, its energy and its future. The industry works with other land users and stakeholders to make sure this sequential land use still enables productive land uses during and after mining," Dr Williams said.

Dr Williams said dynamic management of post-closure mines may include working with the community to explore smart solutions like the development of a network of dams that could help drought-proof the Hunter Valley.

"The mining industry is a comparably small Hunter River water user and its discharges contribute only 3 per cent to Hunter River salinity. Because of tight regulations and adherence to them, the industry does not adversely interact with high value alluvial aquifers and has very low levels of disruption to water supplies to other land users," Dr Williams said.

"Companies are voluntarily improving their water management and are sharing surplus water for recycling within the industry.

"Mining companies are already responsible custodians of numerous heritage homesteads in the Hunter Valley. The preservation of most of these has been made more secure by the resources provided by mining company ownership working in concert with local families and others in the community.

"A sustainable mining industry means balancing social needs, economic benefits and environmental impacts. This complex relationship is managed by the combination of capable and dedicated people within and outside the industry to ensure the Hunter's environmental credentials are maintained in parallel with its enormous social and economic contributions, Dr Williams said.

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