

NEW SOUTH WALES MINERALS COUNCIL LTD

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MEDIA STATEMENT

NSWMC COMMENTS ON DRAFT UPPER HUNTER REPORT

16 March 2005

“The NSW Minerals Council (NSWMC) welcomes a strategic approach to planning across NSW - including the Upper Hunter region.

“Managing increased competition for land use in this State requires that environmental, social and economic values are assessed and genuinely incorporated into the planning framework. Partial exclusion or token inclusion of any one of these pillars of sustainability undermines the credibility of the planning process and risks delivering outcomes that fail the community as a whole.

“The development and release of the draft report is at odds with legislated planning and review processes. It proposes the introduction of a new development assessment standard. This would add another level of assessment, consultation and independent review on top of the current comprehensive and effective regime of environmental impact assessment which has evolved over decades of policy development in NSW.

“The outcomes outlined in the Upper Hunter Strategic Assessment Report can be achieved without this unnecessary duplication by including the obligation to provide a Water Resource Assessment and Water Management Plan in the EIS requirements set down by the Director-General of DIPNR. The studies would then be undertaken concurrently with the EIS. In this scenario, the environmental outcomes would be exactly the same - but without lengthy delays and uncertainty for both the community and the proponent.”

Dr Nikki Williams, Chief Executive Officer, NSW Minerals Council

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