

Endorsed Minutes

11 May 2016

Meeting:	Williamtown Contamination Investigation Community Reference Group (CRG)	Date: 11 May 2016
Location:	Newcastle Airport Board Room	Time: 4.00 to 6:45pm
Number:	1607	
Chairperson:	Jodie Calvert Asst Regional Coordinator Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC)	
Secretariat:	Cheryl Clarke Regional Liaison Officer DPC	
Attendees:	Adam Gilligan Manager Hunter Region Environment Protection Authority (EPA)	
	Jeremy Hillman Senior Stakeholder & Communications Officer EPA	
	Glenda Briggs Regional Manager Department of Primary Industries	
	James McLachlan Department of Defence	
	Sarah Davis Department of Defence	
	Vicki Pearce Department of Defence	
	David Hartog Department of Defence	
	Wayne Wallis General Manager Port Stephens Council	
	Mike McIntosh Port Stephens Council	
	Darren Cleary Hunter Water	
	Jennifer Pritchard Hunter Water	
	Paul Farrell Hunter Water	
	Mitchell Cutting Office of the Parliamentary Secretary for Hunter & Central Coast	
	Rhianna Gorfine President, Williamtown and Surrounds Residents Action Group	
	Robert Gauta Manager, Commercial Fisherman's Coop	
	Phil Blanch Community Member and Fisher's Representative	
	Don Burgoyne NSW Farmer's Association Community Member & Oyster Farmer	
	Lyndsay Clout Fullerton Cove Resident	

Julie Bailey | Salt Ash Community First

Apologies

Scot MacDonald | Parliamentary Secretary for Hunter & Central Coast

Prof David Durrheim | Director Health Protection | Hunter New England Local Health District

Air Commodore Craig Heap | Department of Defence

Justin Hamilton | Fullerton Cove Action Group & Williamtown Salt Ash Flood Group

Cain Gorfine | President, Williamtown and Surrounds Residents Action Group

Cornelius Disselkoen | Maria's Vegetable Farm | Community Member

Gavin Smith | President, Salt Ash Community First

Andrew Smith | CEO Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council | Community Member

Mark Salm | NSW Farmer's Association | Community Member & Oyster Farmer

Number	Action Item	Responsible	Due Date
1607-1	Circulate Defence Fact Sheet on remediation options to CRG	DPC	completed
1607-2	Upload Fact Sheet on remediation options to Defence Website	Defence	ASAP
1607-3	Publish updated fish testing reports	DPI/EPA	3.6.16
1607-4	Circulate Defence Legal formal statement on compensation claims to CRG	DPC	completed
1607-5	Defence to continue to seek uploading of all community documents at the earliest time	Defence	ASAP
1607-6	Defence to follow up on the preparation of the Fact Sheet on the Australian Government Business Transition Payment	Defence	3.6.16
1607-7	DPC to seek clarification of discussions around cost of water connection from outside the investigation area	DPC	completed
1607-8	Circulate the 'Get Ready' flyer to PSC and CRG to encourage local business participation in the	DPC	completed

Number	Action Item	Responsible	Due Date
Community Resilience Forums			
1607-9	Hunter Water to prepare further information on requirements for connecting to town water by residents outside of the investigation area for circulation to CRG and uploaded to website	Hunter Water	10.6.16
1607-10	Defence to liaise directly with the School Principal to provide a solution to the issues raised regarding soil movement and testing	Defence	10.6.16
1607-11	Defence to provide confirmation at the next CRG meeting of who will manage the water treatment plant	Defence	23.6.16
1607-12	Coordinate a presentation by Defence, EPA and PSC to local valuers to provide understanding of what is occurring around the investigation/remediation	DPC/Defence	10.6.16

Meeting minutes

Item / Issue	Response	Decision
2. Endorsement of Minutes	Endorsed with amendment to section 6 CRG Roadmap. The sentence should read: It will involve a 50 days process covering tank assessment (to see if suitable for cleaning), cleaning, re-filling with potable water and re- testing.	Minutes to be circulated
3. Actions List	<p>1604-8 Defence has reviewed the content of Project Update April 2016 brochure in view of the feedback regarding its length and content and created a new Fact Sheet as a replacement.</p> <p>1605-8 1604-9 The Fact Sheet is focused on providing information around the trials of remediation technologies. The Fact Sheet will be made available on the Defence website.</p> <p>1605-7 The Assistant Minister for Defence (AMINDEF) is preparing a formal response to the CRG. Phil Blanch has received a response directly from the AMINDEF and expressed his disappointment with the content.</p> <p>1604-9 1606-2 Defence is unable to provide information relating to a particular company until notification to that company has been provided.</p>	<p>DPC to circulate Fact Sheet on remediation options to CRG</p> <p>Defence to upload Fact Sheet on remediation options to Website</p>

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	<p>1605-12 The Williamstown fishing sampling program led by NSW DPI finished on 24 April to enable Defence to complete the HHRA. Fish sampling was undertaken in accordance with the Expert Panel recommendations. The major barrier to the amount of sampling undertaken was laboratory capacity.</p> <p>1606-12 There is no further prawn sampling planned at this time. Further sampling needs will be considered following completion of the HHRA and analysis of all samples collected to date. The current focus is on depuration studies. Community noted that there are no new fish test results on EPA website only preliminary testing results. Community is seeking updated reports released.</p>	<p>EPA/DPI to publish updated fish testing reports</p>
	<p>1606-4 Formal statement from the Office of Defence Special Counsel regarding compensation claims made against the Commonwealth was tabled.</p>	<p>DPC to circulate Defence Legal formal statement on compensation claims to CRG</p>
	<p>1603-2, 1694-16, 1605-1 Defence website is currently subject to a major review. As a result, difficulties are being experienced in uploading documents to the public site. Defence to continue to seek uploading of documents at the earliest possible time.</p>	<p>Defence to continue to seek uploading of all community documents at the earliest time</p>
	<p>1602-6 The request for Defence to fund plumbing costs for community to connect to reticulated water remains under consideration. The request has been escalated to Ministerial level. However, as the government is now in Caretaker mode, the timeline for an outcome could be affected.</p>	
	<p>1605-4 DPI advised that confirmation has not been received and no statement is to be made at this stage. Any further conversation related to this matter is to be held between DPI/Mr Blanch/fishers.</p>	
	<p>1605-5 Template document unable to be provided. No longer required.</p>	
	<p>1606-6 EPA advised that the Investigation Area was created to protect human health while detailed investigations are conducted. The area was not devised based on a threshold level for PFOS/PFOA, rather to encompass known and suspected areas of contamination emanating from the Williamstown RAAF Base. The investigation area boundary was determined with advice from NSW government agencies, and was based on a number of factors including relevant geographic factors such as available surface water and groundwater analytical data, topographical features and local geological and hydrogeological conditions. EPA confirmed that Moore's drain is part of the Investigation Area.</p>	
	<p>1606-7 The AMINDEF announced an extension of the financial assistance package to fishers for 8 weeks beyond 30 June 2016. In addition, as from 1 July, 2016, fishers can claim a further Hardship Payment of up to \$20,000 and a Business Transition Payment of</p>	

Item / Issue	Response	Decision
	up to \$25,000 to assist in pursuing alternative sources of income if there is a delay in reopening fisheries beyond 30 June 2016. A Fact Sheet on eligibility and criteria for the Business Transition Payment will be prepared by the Australian Government.	Defence to follow up on the preparation of the Fact Sheet on the Australian Government Business Transition Payment
4. Water Reticulation Program	<p>Hunter Water provided an overview of project milestones and timelines for connecting residents within the investigation area in the order of Fullerton Cove Road, Lavis Lane and Salt Ash. The project timeline document which includes periods for consultation and construction works will be uploaded to a dedicated project page on the Hunter Water website. http://www.hunterwater.com.au/Major-Projects/Project-Pages/Williamtown-Water.aspx</p> <p>Residents in the investigation area have until 31 March 2017 to inform Hunter Water whether they wish to connect to the town water supply.</p> <p>Hunter Water advised that, as a state owned corporation, they have no power to subsidise residents outside of the investigation area boundary. This area is being funded by NSW Government and all other residents are subject to normal user pays arrangements.</p> <p>Lindsay raised the issue of a resident situated 40m from the boundary who has concerns about surface water runoff and a concrete tank. He cited his understanding that there would be potential for reduced cost connection for properties nearby the investigation area.</p> <p>DPC clarified the situation (post meeting) to be:</p> <p><i>The NSW Government (including the Parliamentary Secretary) was very clear that the NSW Government funded water reticulation program applied to properties within the investigation area only (IA). The Parliamentary Secretary's view has always been that residents outside of the IA should have a discussion with Hunter Water to see if there is any opportunity to leverage off the current infrastructure work.</i></p> <p><i>Hunter Water advised that residents outside of the IA can still seek connection to the water supply. This connection would be at their own expense but they would only pay the actual cost of connection to the existing (or new) water main. That cost will vary depending upon the location of the property from the water mains. Hunter</i></p>	DPC to seek clarification of discussions around cost of water connection from outside the investigation area

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	<p><i>Water advises that the cost could still be a considerable amount which might be where the misunderstanding lies. Residents in Salt Ash would appear to benefit the most as the NSW Government funded program will deliver mains infrastructure to the area (which does not presently exist) and this would reduce the cost of connection for properties outside of the IA in this area.</i></p> <p>Hunter Water and EPA confirmed that the reticulation program will continue for properties within the current investigation area and this will not change should the boundary be reduced at some future time.</p>	
5. Survey on Business Impacts	<p>PSC provided an overview of the purpose, methodology and results of the business survey which was aimed at gauging the impacts of the contamination issue on businesses within the investigation area.</p> <p>The survey was circulated to around 3,000 registered businesses and property owners; 31 responses received; over 60% reported nil or minor impact, 13% major impact and 13% significant impact. The survey highlighted gaps in business continuity planning across local business. DPC noted that free community resilience forums (which include a business continuity component) will be held across the Hunter and Central Coast in June 2016. Community members are encouraged to distribute the 'Get Ready' flyer within their network to promote participation in the forums.</p>	DPC to circulate the 'Get Ready' flyer to CRG to encourage local business participation in the Community Resilience Forums
6. Love Seafood. Love Port Stephens Campaign	<p>PSC provided a presentation on the Love Seafood. Love Port Stephens campaign which aims to restore confidence in the seafood industry in the wake of the Williamtown contamination issue. The campaign comprises 8 short videos that tell the stories of the people behind the seafood industry as well as raising awareness of Port Stephens as a destination for fresh, quality local seafood. The campaign was a successful collaboration between Port Stephens Council, Destination Port Stephens, Newcastle Fisherman's Cooperative, Department of Primary Industries, Sydney Fisherman's Cooperative and the NSW State Government. The CRG was impressed with the quality of the campaign and noted it has reached both national and international audiences with already over 180,000 hits on social media and You Tube. Link to the campaign: http://www.portstephens.org.au/seafood. The CRG thanked all participants in the video and the council for their work on the campaign. PSC advised that stage 2 of the campaign will be developed over the next few months.</p>	
7. CRG Agencies Roadmap	<p>The Roadmap is close to finalisation with agencies requested to clarify particular items. Deferred to next meeting.</p>	
8. Well-being	<p>Defence is supportive of funding the activity and will proceed via a</p>	

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program	competitive tender process. The aim will be for a non-government organisation to work with the local community to develop and deliver the program. The tender process will ensure transparency and accountability for the use of public monies. The tender process will call for expressions of interest from three NGOs who have experience in similar community engagement and have appropriate insurance and qualifications. The program will be made available to all residents in the affected areas. The program will run for one term from July and may be extended depending on the uptake. Defence has requested initial information around potential uptake.	
9. Community concerns	<p>Email from Cain Gorfine – messaging from Defence</p> <p>Rhianna advised that Cain was present as an observer during a meeting between a resident and Michael Lysewycz, Defence Legal. Cain noted a number of references made by Mr Lysewycz which diminished the value of the environmental investigations and the cautionary approach being adopted by government to ensure protection of public health. The Chair noted that the comments have been referred to and acknowledged by the Department of Defence.</p> <p>Temporary Financial Assistance package – The AMINDEF has released details of the extension of the current financial assistance package.</p> <p>Plumbing Costs – there was discussion on the requirements for installing backwater devices on properties to address any risk of contaminants flowing back into the water supply as required by an Australian Standard (AS). Hunter Water advised that a licensed plumber must conduct an assessment against the AS before submitting to Hunter Water. Ongoing certification would be approximately \$150 p/a. This process applies across Hunter Water area of operation and is entirely independent of the Williamtown contamination issue.</p> <p>Council Rates - Lindsay advised that a resident was advised by Port Stephens Council that the rating process is controlled by the Valuer General's assessment. The resident has written to the VG requesting a revaluation of property. The process is available at: http://www.valuergeneral.nsw.gov.au/land_values/request_a_review</p> <p>Hunter Water Test Results – Hunter Water clarified several questions regarding water testing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test results on the website provides the PFOS/PFOA test result of what is coming into the water treatment plants. • The Tomago Borefield is not currently running for operational reasons. • The bore that services the Lemon Tree Passage Water 	<p>Hunter Water to prepare further information on requirements for connecting to town water for circulation to CRG and uploaded to website</p>

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	<p>Treatment Plant at the north eastern edge of the aquifer is being utilised.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There have been no detections of PFOS/PFOA in any water source other than bore station 9 in the Tomago Borefield. • Hunter Water uses the standard commercially available test for PFOS/PFOA and reports results to the limit of detection that is provided by the laboratory. • Testing occurs once per month for each water source. Testing of Tomago bore fields when it is running is undertaken more frequently. <p>Salt Ash Public School – Julie advised that the school is seeking removal and replacement of the vegetable patch soil and further testing of the school grounds. Defence advised that the Principal has been liaising directly with Air Commodore Heap and action has been initiated. The Principal also provided a report to the EPA and has been advised that the soil can be disposed of as ground waste.</p>	<p>Defence to liaise directly with the School Principal to provide a solution to the issues raised on soil relocation and testing</p>
10. Agency Reports (by exception)	<p>Defence</p> <p>Lake Cochran remediation – A \$9m Water Treatment Plant is being installed, as an interim measure, to treat the water leaving Lake Cochran to below the adopted drinking water criteria. It is expected to be operational by September 2016. Defence recognises that the water treatment plant will not be sufficient in the event of a heavy rain event. It is intended that the treatment plant runs continuously to keep water levels low and reduce the risk of overflow. Defence will issue expressions of interest to the industry in July 2016 to look at comprehensive, long-term remediation options for Lake Cochran. Other issues discussed include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flowrate of 70 litres per second is maximum capability. • The flow will run into Dawson's drain after treatment. • The plant will treat a range of contaminants. • A water treatment plant is not being considered for Moore's drain as there is no body of water. There are other works to be conducted on base and Moore's Drain will be considered as part of that work. • Defence is working with PSC in relation to concerns around the general stormwater pipe network flow into Moore's Drain to identify if there are any short-term options available. • The option of a dam to take the overflow from Lake Cochran could be considered as part of long-term options. <p>The community noted that flooding on Medowie Road had increased since Defence construction work on runway and drainage.</p>	<p>Defence to provide confirmation at the next CRG meeting of who will manage the water treatment plant</p>

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	<p>Trials</p> <p>Defence advised that the current trials relates to soil and groundwater with a range of treatments including:</p> <p>Solidification – mixing soil with a cement based agent trapping contaminants in place.</p> <p>Stabilisation – mixing soil with reagents to immobilise the contaminants.</p> <p>Insitu-oxidation – chemical and heat treatment to break down the contaminants.</p> <p>Foam separation – drawing groundwater out and separating the foam for treatment.</p> <p>Defence confirmed that dust management occurs as part of project plans.</p> <p>Banks</p> <p>Defence has advised that individual discussions are occurring between the Treasury, Defence and the big banks to determine policy related to lending within the 2318 postcode. At a local level, DPC will progress a meeting with valuers. The meeting will likely also require presentations from Defence, EPA and possibly Council.</p> <p>PSC has found it difficult to make any assessment on sales in the area as sites are based on land value and tracked from the original purchase.</p>	<p>DPC to coordinate a presentation by Defence, EPA and PSC to local valuers to provide understanding of what is occurring around the investigation/ remediation</p>
	<p>Environment Protection Authority</p> <p>The Expert Panel met on 10 May 2016. The meeting reviewed the timetable around when documents will be delivered by Defence.</p> <p>Department of Primary Industries</p> <p>Fish sampling for the Williamstown Human Health Risk assessment has been completed on advice from Defence to enable timely analysis and other biota sampling. DPI Fisheries continues to undertake depuration studies for prawns, mud crabs and fish.</p> <p>DPI has now extended the fees waived to include Fish receiver application fees for 4 affected commercial fishers and additional commercial fishers. The total of fees/debts waived to date is over \$138,000.</p> <p>Free tickets for a family day out at TOCAL Field Days were very positively received (64 tickets issued to 15 commercial fishing families). Lunch on the day was jointly provided by the Rotary clubs of Williamstown and Telarah- Rutherford.</p>	
11. Other business	Nil	

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12. Future meetings	<p>The next meeting will be Thursday 23 June 2016, RAAF Base. Times to be advised.</p> <p>Agencies will continue to progress matters out of session. CRG members will be kept up to date with fortnightly reports on key messages and progress of outstanding action items in the interim. CRG members can advise DPC of any new concerns that arise within this period and the matter will be either referred to the most appropriate agency or actioned within DPC as the coordinating agency.</p>	

Meeting closed 6.45pm

Next meeting Thursday 23 June at RAAF Base.