

## Endorsed Minutes 2 March 2017

**Meeting:** Williamtown Contamination Investigation Community Reference Group (CRG)

**Date:** 2 March 2017

**Location:** Newcastle Airport Boardroom      Time: 3.35pm to 5.50pm

**Number:** 1703

**Chairperson:** Jodie Calvert | Principal Coordinator | Department of Premier and Cabinet

**Secretariat:** Cheryl Clarke | Senior Coordination Officer | Department of Premier and Cabinet

**Attendees:** Glenda Briggs | Regional Manager | Department of Primary Industries  
 Marcus Jeffery | Estate and Infrastructure | Department of Defence  
 Air Commodore Craig Heap | Department of Defence  
 Evelina Hendry | Senior Stakeholder & Communications Officer | EPA  
 Sarah Davis | Project Officer | Department of Defence  
 Kathy Kent | Department of Human Services  
 Vicki Pearce | PFAS Branch | Department of Defence  
 Chris Carlile | Prime Minister and Cabinet PFAS TaskForce (*by phone item 4*)  
 Wayne Wallis | General Manager | Port Stephens Council  
 Dr Kat Taylor | Hunter New England Local Health District  
 Nick Marshall | Salt Ash Community First  
 Don Burgoyne | NSW Farmer's Association | Community Member & Oyster Farmer  
 Lyndsay Clout | Fullerton Cove Resident  
 Robert Gauta | Manager, Commercial Fishermen's Coop  
 Justin Hamilton | Fullerton Cove Action Group & Williamtown Salt Ash Flood Group  
 Phil Blanch | Community Member and Fisher's Representative  
 Cornelius Disselkoe | Maria's Vegetable Farm | Community Member  
 Kellie Ayres | Senior Communications Specialist | RPS

**Apologies** Adam Gilligan Regional Director North | Environment Protection Authority (EPA)  
 Karen Marler | Manager Hunter Region | EPA  
 Dr David Durrheim | Hunter New England Local Health District  
 Cindy Toms Health Protection Policy Branch | Department of Health (Cmwth)  
 Andrew Smith | CEO Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council | Community Member  
 Mark Salm | NSW Farmer's Association | Community Member & Oyster Farmer  
 Cain Gorfine | Williamtown and Surrounds Residents Action Group  
 Kim Smith | Salt Ash Community First

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Number	Action Item	Responsible	Due Date
1703-1	Chair to contact EPA management to progress release of Fact Sheet on Air Monitoring	Chair	8.3.17
1703-2	EPA to circulate electronic copy of Fact Sheet to CRG members	EPA/DPC	15.3.17
1703-3	EPA and Hunter Water to liaise regarding protocols for soil stockpiling	EPA	15.3.17
1703-4	NSW Government to forward formal request for Commonwealth financial support to dusky flathead fishers	EPA/DPI	22.3.17
1703-5	DPI to seek information on coxswain training vacancies	DPI	15.3.17
1703-6	Defence to determine what information on the residential sampling program can be regularly reported to the CRG and uploaded to website	Defence	6.4.17
1703-7	The Chair will draft comments and forward to the CRG reps for additions prior to forwarding to Defence for consideration and consultation with its Strategic Communications Advisor	Chair	16.3.17
1703-8	DPC Chair to circulate electronic copy of the Review Report to CRG members	Chair	16.3.17
1703-9	Vicki Pearce to look at drain/pipe out to sea question as part of the drainage review	Defence	6.4.17
1703-10	Evelina Hendry to refer question on flood-gates to EPA/OEH	EPA	6.4.17
1703-11	Defence to circulate a map of the location of monitoring wells when the map becomes available	Defence	6.4.17

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## Meeting minutes

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### 1. Endorsement of Minutes – 19 January 2017 and 2 February 2017

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### 2. Actions List

1701-2 Defence advised that two information flyers on sampling programs and management action being taken on the base will be delivered to residents next week. It will also be available on the Defence website and printed for Paul's corner store and Lindsay's garden centre. The flyers will also be sent electronically to stakeholders who have opted to receive updates via email

1701-5 A plain-English fact sheet on Dr Bowles' presentation on air monitoring has been prepared and submitted through the EPA approval process.

*Chair to contact EPA management to progress release of Fact Sheet on Air Monitoring*

*EPA to circulate electronic copy of Fact Sheet to CRG members*

1702-4 Defence advised that a contract for the installation of a water treatment plant on Moors Drain is expected to be signed within the next few days. Delivery would be anticipated on-site in early May 2017 and commissioned approximately three weeks later. The pilot is expected to be completed by no later than the end of July 2017. If the pilot is successful, a larger water treatment plant will be delivered by September 2017.

1702-5 A follow up meeting on drain clearing works will be progressed out of session with fishers by EPA.

1702-6 Defence advised that data relating to pre and post filtration of the Lake Cochran Water Treatment Plant is expected to be available in two weeks with fortnightly updates thereafter. The Fact sheet on sampling and filtration processes will also be published on the website at this time.

1702-11 Defence advised that the water loggers maintain information on flow rates and water heights as part of PFAS investigations. This information assists in determining parameters for the construction of water treatment plants. Approval to install the water loggers was received from Port Stephens Council prior to installation.

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### 3. CRG Roadmap

**1. Water Reticulation** – Salt Ash piping almost completed with the remainder of these works required on Paul's Corner. The project is still on target to achieve completion by 30 June 2017. Expression of interest to plumbers to undertake private connection works has closed and will now proceed to tender. Work is expected to commence by mid-April 2017 with an estimated October completion date. Hunter Water has conducted letter box drops and door-knocks for residents regarding the program. Fullerton Cove connections will occur within the same project timeline. Hunter Water will place an advertisement in the Port Stephens Examiner on 9 March 2017 and again a couple of weeks later to remind the community of the cut-off date for entry into the program by 31 March 2017. Defence advised that around 75% of residents have accepted the private plumbing offer, 19% Nil response and

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6% No. Pipe will still run past non-connect homes. Nick Marshall requested clarity on soil that has been stockpiled on Nelson Bay Road and whether it has been tested.

*EPA and Hunter Water to liaise regarding protocols for soil stockpiling*

**2. Dusky Flathead fishers** – Defence requires a formal letter from the NSW Government seeking financial support for Dusky Flathead Fishers.

*EPA to forward formal request to Commonwealth Government seeking financial support for fishers.*

**6. Coxswain training** – DPI is negotiating with the service provider for a training date. Phil Blanch sought information on vacancies for the training.

*DPI to seek information on training vacancies*

**7. Seafood Promotion Campaign** - Rob Gauta advised that the promotional videos have been developed. Marketing and PR activity over the summer months was kept to a minimum to ensure investment could be leveraged over a longer time period. Over the next few weeks, there will be press advertisements and editorials and a Co-op Open Day for the April school holidays. An industry education program for local hotel and restaurants will also be drafted for industry approval.

**8. Investigation Sampling** - Defence advised that communication on the investigation sampling will be via fact Sheet to the community (Action 1701-2).

**9. Residential Sampling Program** – Defence advised that there have been around 500 bores/tanks sampled to date with some sampled twice. Defence will clarify what information on the sampling program can be made public and will consider uploading to the Defence website. Once the investigation works are completed in September 2017, an ongoing management plan to monitor contamination will be developed. Note: **\*Note – Defence has subsequently confirmed that it is not appropriate to upload this information to the website. However, updates will be made via CRG meetings\***

*Defence to determine what information on the residential sampling program can be regularly reported to the CRG and uploaded to website*

**11. Moors Drain Functional Assessment** - The Moors Drain Functional Assessment Report is currently with Defence PFAS Branch. Defence intends holding discussions with Port Stephens Council in the next two weeks. Update to be provided at the next CRG meeting.

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## 4. Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C)

### 4.1 PFAS Task Force

The Task Force will provide strategic oversight, ensure commonwealth agencies are working together and that the commonwealth is working with State/Territories through COAG. Individual commonwealth agencies will continue to be responsible for activities within their portfolio. An interdepartmental committee of Commonwealth agencies sits underneath the Task Force and meets regularly. The CRG was advised that work relating to the interim Health guidelines is almost complete and information on values will shortly be available to the community.

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The CRG was advised that ideas around a Future Fund are under consideration. However, there is currently no formal position on this issue. The Task Force will iterate community needs through their discussions with Commonwealth agencies.

Nick Marshall voiced community concern around the availability and frequency of blood sampling being determined by the polluter. He requested that the decision regarding monitoring and frequency be left to health professionals through Medicare. PM&C representative, Chris Carlile noted that the actual blood testing is probably not on the benefits schedule which would be the reason for going to tender and that he was unaware of what clinical frequency would be appropriate. He will raise the question of ongoing testing with the Commonwealth Department of Health and deliver the response back through the CRG Chair, Jodie Calvert, NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Lindsay Clout asked for comment on whether a representative from the PM&C Taskforce would sit on the CRG. Chris replied that they would not formally sit on the CRG but would be happy to be engaged in some meetings.

There was discussion around attendance of experts at the national summit on PFAS to be held in Victoria in April 2017. The target audience of the summit is regulators and representatives from State/Territory environment agencies. CRG community members were interested in knowing which Federal Government agencies would be attending the summit. Chris Carlile advised the Commonwealth Department of Environment would likely be in attendance.

Justin Hamilton noted that the community representatives have been involved in the Williamstown experience for approximately 18 months and this has been a learning environment for both State and Commonwealth governments. The community representatives would like to share their experience and perspectives with the Task Force to help shape the way forward. They would welcome the opportunity to meet with the Task Force and get the Prime Minister on board.

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## 5. Discussion Items

### 5.1 CRG Draft Communication Strategy

The Chair noted that whilst agencies such as Defence and EPA have their own communication/media units, there is a gap with the CRG not having its own communication strategy and the Chair unable to talk to media.

Vicki Pearce advised that a communications adviser has been brought into the Defence PFAS Environmental Management and Remediation Team to improve communication with the community. There was general discussion around the need for a range of improvements including:

- the need for agencies to understand the angst in the community and how anxiety rises when new things appear without prior explanation eg green water loggers
- the importance of getting information out to the community before something occurs
- the opportunity for the adviser to influence other commonwealth agencies about how best to manage community anxiety in their planning and activities
- that community activities should be scheduled at times that best suit the community
- there should not be strategic delivery of media announcements – just announcements when decisions are made
- that plain English summaries and readable Executive Summaries are

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essential in communicating with the community

*The Chair will draft comments and forward to the CRG reps for additions prior to forwarding to Defence for consideration and consultation with its Strategic Communications Adviser*

## 5.2 CRG Review

The Chair advised that the CRG Review report and Assessment Panel Response is now ready to be forwarded to the CEO of EPA. A Terms of Reference document has been drafted. The Chair advised that the matter remains confidential and is not to be discussed with anyone outside of the CRG. The Chair noted that community groups can conduct their own EOI process and nominate their candidate. The EOI process will also be open to the wider community. Lindsay noted that he kept everyone updated on the progress as he was representing the community. He considers the outcome to be a good collaborative effort. This group will continue until the new format is in place which is expected to be by 1 July 2017.

*DPC Chair to circulate electronic copy of the Review Report to CRG members*

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## 6 Information Items

### GPs Information Session

Dr Taylor noted that Hunter New England Population Health Unit, in collaboration with the Primary Health Network, will deliver further information sessions on blood testing program to GPs. This aims to address the variable level of understanding by GPs in the community.

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## 7. General Business:

EPA noted that OEH is working on a waste management plant that will be submitted to EPA for approval.

Defence noted there was information in the community that the Water Treatment Plant was not operating during the recent CRG tour. However, this is incorrect. The Water Treatment Plant was operating during the tour with the discharge going back through the pipes and flowing out through Dawsons Drain.

Nick Marshall asked whether pipes could run through drains and out to sea so as not to upset sediment.

*Vicki Pearce to look at drain/pipe question as part of the drainage review*

Phil Blanch asked whether the floodgates could be closed during the weed clearing to let the contents settle.

*Evelina Hendry to refer question on flood-gates to EPA*

There was general discussion on the location of monitoring wells. Vicki Pearce noted that information on the monitoring wells is located in the Report and there will be more installed in the future.

*Defence to circulate a map of the location of monitoring wells when the map becomes available*

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Meeting closed: 5.50pm

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**Next meeting:** 6 April 2017