

Endorsed Minutes 18 August 2016

Meeting: Williamtown Contamination Investigation Community Reference Group (CRG)

Date: 18 August 2016

Location: Newcastle Airport Boardroom Time: 3.30pm to 6.30pm

Number: 1612

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

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

Attendees:

Air Commodore Craig Heap | Department of Defence

James McLachlan | Department of Defence

Karen Marler | A/Manager Hunter Region | EPA

Evelina Hendry | Senior Stakeholder & Communications Officer | EPA

Dr Kathryn Taylor | Hunter New England Local Health District

Ed Janssen | Office of the Chief Scientist

Glenda Briggs | Regional Manager | Department of Primary Industries

Wayne Wallis | General Manager | Port Stephens Council

Darren Cleary | Chief Operating Officer | Hunter Water

Jeremy Bath | Chief Customer Service Officer | Hunter Water

Dr Brendan Berghout | Senior Water Resource Engineer | Hunter Water

Dr Will Glamore | Expert Panel & Water Working Group member (by phone following Hunter Water presentation)

Don Burgoyne | NSW Farmer's Association | Community Member & Oyster Farmer

Phil Blanch | Community Member and Fisher's Representative

Lyndsay Clout | Fullerton Cove Resident

Nick Marshall | Salt Ash Community First

Kim Smith | Salt Ash Community First

Cain Gorfine | Williamtown and Surrounds Residents Action Group

Apologies

Scot MacDonald | Parliamentary Secretary for Hunter and Central Coast

Adam Gilligan | Regional Director, North | NSW EPA

Chris Birrer | First Assistant Secretary | Department of Defence

Sarah Davis | Department of Defence

Dr Craig Dalton | Hunter New England Local Health District

Prof David Durrheim | Hunter New England Local Health District

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Rhianna Gorfine | President, Williamtown and Surrounds Residents Action Group
Justin Hamilton | Fullerton Cove Action Group & Williamtown Salt Ash Flood Group
Robert Gauta | Manager, Commercial Fisherman's Coop
Cornelius Disselkoen | Maria's Vegetable Farm | Community Member
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
1612-1	Defence to provide further information regarding the catchment area for the exit points from Base into Moors Drain	Defence	8.9.16
1612-2	EPA to circulate methodology of the weed removal program to CRG	EPA	1.9.16
1612-3	EPA to circulate details of the weed removal program to the wider community	EPA	1.9.16
1612-4	Defence to integrate the community questions and answers into the Master document for DPC to circulate to the community members	Defence/DPC	completed
1612-5	Defence will ascertain whether undercover security was hired for the community events	Defence	8.9.16
1612-6	Defence to consult Roger Drew regarding request for an air testing program	Defence	8.9.16
1612-7	The question of air testing to be raised with the Chief Scientist	EPA/OCS	8.9.16
1612-8	Defence to clarify their position on whether they will pay for all associated plumbing costs for residents to be placed on mains water including a full breakdown of what costs Defence will pay and relevant processes i.e. undertake the actual service, reimburse, or pay direct to invoice etc	Defence	8.9.16
1612-9	Defence to clarify their position on whether it will fund ongoing water costs associated with the use of reticulated water on properties	Defence	8.9.16
1612-10	Hunter Water to provide a statement on the 'Health Check' for circulation to the CRG members and update on the Hunter Water website for the information of the community	Hunter Water	8.9.16

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Number	Action Item	Responsible	Due Date
1612-11	Hunter Water will review surface water/drainage path between north east landfill and Campvale swamp	HW	8.9.16
1612-12	Ascertain information on the location of the detection in Lemon Tree passage in September 2015 in respect to the bore line	HW	8.9.16
1612-13	Advise on whether testing requests have been received for industries around Campvale Road	EPA	8.9.16
1612-14	Defence to identify Campvale testing information from the AECOM report	Defence	8.9.16
1612-15	Defence to check whether a second remediation machine has been ordered	Defence	8.9.16
1612-16	PSC to ascertain whether rate reductions are to be backdated	PSC	8.9.16
1612-17	DPI to check arrangements regarding notifications to the identified fisher	DPI	completed
1612-18	DPI to followup on HHRA prawn sample information, any outstanding stored aquatic samples and any future testing to inform decisions around closures	DPI	8.9.16
1612-19	Obtain progress report from OEH on mass spectrometer	OCS/EPA	8.9.16

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Meeting minutes

1. Endorsement of Minutes – 4 August 2016

Defence sought amendment to reflect it is liaising with Hunter Water regarding funding of \$3.5m by the Federal Government; and confirming that Hunter Water activities continue with Defence committed to supporting connection to reticulated water including through funding compliance checks.

Minutes of 4 August 2016 Endorsed.

2. Actions List

1608-8 Report on Moors Drain Functional Assessment expected end August 2016.

1608-9 Defence has formally engaged the Family Action Centre, University of Newcastle to deliver the well-being program for the affected communities.

1610-4, 1610-6, 1610-11, 1610-15, 1610-7 Defence provided answers to additional questions which are to be incorporated into the master community questions table for circulation to the community. Further information is required in respect to the catchment area for the exit points from Base into Moors Drain. Defence will provide a presentation on the water treatment filtration plant including the process of de-watering and disposal pathway of 'waste' at the next CRG meeting.

Defence to provide further information regarding the catchment area for the exit points from Base into Moors Drain

1610-9 Defence is aware of concerns from community that residents have had to meet the cost of the connection to town water supply. Defence is writing to Hunter Water requesting details of the scope of the project.

1610-12 Defence is working with the Commonwealth Department of Health to finalise the arrangements for implementing a voluntary blood testing program with a view to its commencement during September 2016. Interim arrangements are in place to reimburse individuals in the investigation area who have already obtained blood tests. Individuals seeking reimbursement will need to provide a valid receipt and bank details to facilitate reimbursement through Electronic Funds Transfer or Cheque. Individuals seeking payment of an invoice will need to provide Defence with a valid unpaid invoice and relevant details to enable Defence to provide payment to that service provider. Claims including scanned documents should be emailed to PFC.Coordination@defence.gov.au or to PFC Coordination, PO Box 7923 Canberra BC ACT 2610. Further details can be obtained from the Hotline on 1800 011 443 or

<http://www.defence.gov.au/id/ Master/docs/PFOSPF0A/PFASAug16>

1610-13 EPA distributed a map showing the outline of the sampling area for the mechanical weed removal program at Fullerton Cove, Williamtown and Salt Ash. EPA advised that there will be a sediment and vegetation sampling program to examine PFAS levels and determine management of the weed refuse. The program is expected to commence within a fortnight. Sampling will take place in the waterway, on the banks and a short distance away. EPA agreed to sample before and after the weed removal and will share results with the community. Phil Blanch requested that testing occurs into the waterway at Tilligerry Creek to ensure PFAS levels are not being elevated by the works. Don Burgoyne requested EPA ascertain recent sample levels for both Fullerton Cove and Tilligerry Creek to ensure that there is a baseline for comparison against post works. EPA welcomed suggestions from the CRG regarding suggested sites for testing. Cain Gorfine

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noted that clarity will be required for the methodology around Dawsons Drain given the recent elevated levels. The community requested that information on the proposed EPA and OEH activities be made available more widely through the local newspaper or letterbox drop.

EPA to circulate methodology of the weed removal program to CRG

EPA to circulate details of the weed removal program to the wider community

Defence to integrate the community questions and answers into the Master document for DPC to circulate to the community

1611-1 Information about Defence sites which have known contamination is publicly available at <http://www.defence.gov.au/id/derp/default.asp>

1611- 3 Defence is trying to understand the catchment areas on Base that feed into Moors Drain, as this may indicate a possible source for PFAS being present in the drain. Defence will provide more detail on the catchment areas at the next CRG meeting.

1611-4 EPA advised that a review of the website will occur following completion of the Commonwealth Government's review of EnHealth guidelines and all future testing will be reported in the same way as the EnHealth guidelines.

3. ESA/HHRA – Next Steps

Defence advised that they have received initial feedback from the NSW Expert Panel regarding data gaps and recommendations for more testing in fruit, vegetables, beef and milk. Defence is yet to formally respond. Copies of correspondence from EPA to Defence and the Expert Panel to EPA can be located at: <http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/MediaInformation/williamtown.htm>

Lindsay Clout noted that he has received a hard copy report (15 volumes) and found a very basic error in the findings regarding Lake Cochran and its connections to drains. He expressed concerns around the validity of the report and findings and whether decisions will be made on incorrect information. Defence advised that an investigation process normally takes up to 3 years but has taken 10 months in this case. The Expert Panel and EPA are still considering the report. This is not the end of the process from the NSW Government.

Nick Marshall noted that community members felt intimidated by the presence of local police at the public information session on 9 August 2016. Defence advised local police were advised that the event was being held in view of the large gathering but made no request for police to attend the event. Nick Marshall also suggested that undercover security was used by Defence at the drop-in event. Defence advised that contracted security was hired as a crowd control function to assist the crowd in the case of an emergency evacuation and with logistics.

Defence will ascertain whether undercover security was hired for the community events

Nick Marshall noted his discussions with Roger Drew, Defence toxicologist, and the Chief Scientist, regarding the value of conducting air testing on the Base and in the community and requested that a program be implemented. He noted that air is not being monitored since commencement of the construction works.

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Defence to consult Roger Drew regarding request for an air testing program

The question of air testing to also be raised with the Chief Scientist

4. Federal Government commitments

Water Reticulation

Phil Blanch noted the community's concern that they are still waiting on a decision by Defence as to whether they will meet residents' costs associated with compliance checks and private plumbing costs for connection to reticulated water. Defence reiterated the Minister's broad commitment to water reticulation and indicated that Defence is writing to Hunter water to further examine the strategy.

The community raised issues relating to the use of town water in both domestic and in farming (including during times of drought) given people are no longer able to use their bores. Hunter Water confirmed that 'water wise' applies to rural properties with exceptions for some businesses. Phil Blanch noted that there will be residents who will now face significant costs for water usage having never previously borne that expense.

Defence to clarify their position on whether they will pay for all associated plumbing costs for residents to be placed on mains water including a full breakdown of what costs Defence will pay and relevant processes i.e. undertake the actual service, reimburse, or pay direct to invoice etc.

Defence to clarify their position on whether they will fund ongoing oncosts associated with the use of reticulated water.

Hunter Water advised that they will conduct a 'health check' at no cost to residents to provide some indication of plumbing compliance issues. It was noted that pressure issues can be addressed in different ways.

Hunter Water to provide a statement on the 'Health Check' for circulation to the CRG members and update on the Hunter Water website for the information of the community

5. Hunter Water Corporation

Dr Brendan Berghout, Senior Water Resource Engineer, Hunter Water, provided a presentation on the hydrology between Williamstown and Campvale to address community concern around the potential for a link between RAAF Base Williamstown and Grahamstown Dam. Dr Berghout discussed the direction of groundwater flow which is governed by the slope of the watertable which moves in a southerly direction from RAAF Williamstown; the direction of surface water flow which is governed by the shape of the ground surface topography and prevents the surface water flowing north to Campvale Canal and the hydrology of the Tomago Sandbeds. He noted that there is no interplay between Grahamstown Dam and the aquifer due to a clay core in the dam wall which acts as a barrier. He advised that there is no evidence that contamination is moving from the RAAF Base to Campvale. Dr Berghout noted that the southerly direction of the plume is consistent with Hunter Water's observations over 40 years.

Hunter Water explained that an investigation following a detection of PFOS in Richardson Road showed that a routine monitoring sample for reticulated water was taken from bore water and not reticulated water. There was a nil detect in the

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drinking water. EPA and the resident were contacted. The RAAF Base is not considered to be the source.

Hunter Water has been sampling for PFAS in the water extracted from Grahamstown Dam since October 2015, and Campvale Canal since March 2016. These results indicate that while trace quantities of PFAS have been detected in Campvale Canal, they are well below guideline levels for safe drinking water and are likely to be attributable to urban runoff. The results vary between 0.002 micrograms per litre and 0.004 micrograms per litre and are not surprising given the existence of PFAS in a wide range of products and technological improvements in laboratories to detect trace amounts.

Hunter Water is also conducting routine testing of reticulated water throughout the town supply. Although there have been detections in 2016, these are well below the 2016 US EPA guidance level for water utilities. Trace level detections of PFOS/PFOA in reticulated water is not unexpected given its widespread use. Published water quality data from Australia and overseas shows trace detections of PFOA/PFOA are common in many reticulated water supplies.

Nick Marshall questioned whether there is a connection between the North East landfill and Campvale swamp due to the existence of table drains which allow the water to pool and flow through the culverts under the road. Dr Berghout noted that if there is a drainage path, it would only be possible where the source is higher than the destination and there is no high point in between locations. Hunter Water advised that based on their evidence it is not possible, however, will make further enquiries regarding any drainage that they are not aware of.

Hunter Water will review surface water/drainage between north east landfill and Campvale swamp

Dr Glamore noted that the drain water has to be lower than the surrounding groundwater in order for contaminants to be present in the surface water. During floods this is not the case (the groundwater is recharging, not discharging). This process has been confirmed as an important issue and the Expert Panel has encouraged Defence to integrate this process into their broader sampling programs.

Cain Gorfine raised concerns that PFOS can travel up gradient. Dr Berghout noted that contamination will not move up naturally and cannot move between pumping stations to travel to campvale.

Nick Marshall requested the location of the detection in Lemon Tree Passage in September 2015 in respect to the bore line.

Hunter Water will ascertain information on the location of the detection in Lemon Tree Passage in September 2015 in respect to the bore line.

Kim Smith asked whether products from industries such as mushroom farms and chicken farms at Campvale are being tested prior to going to market. EPA advised that testing would not occur if it's outside the investigation area. All detection letters are delivered personally to residents by Air Commodore Heap.

EPA to advise on whether testing requests have been received for industries around Campvale Road

EPA's current focus is to investigate high contamination sources. However, the individual businesses in this area could approach EPA directly and request testing. EPA and the Expert Panel have already written to Defence seeking

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further testing to obtain more sampling data.

Defence to identify Campvale testing information from the AECOM report

Lindsay Clout asked whether the widening samples would result in an amendment to the investigation area. EPA advised that the Expert Panel is seeking more information from Defence to make such an assessment.

Hunter Water circulated a copy of the powerpoint presentation and a report dated 18 August 2016 'Williamtown to Campvale Hydrology' to the CRG.

6. Agencies updates (by exception) NSW EPA

EPA circulated an update on the state-wide investigation into PFAS contamination across NSW that had been provided to the Williamtown ERG. EPA also provided a breakdown of the NSW Government budget allocation for the 2016-2017FY.

7. General Business

Nick Marshall asked whether Defence ordered a second remediation machine?

Defence to check whether a second remediation machine has been ordered

Lindsay Clout noted that information from the Valuer General's office is that the rate reductions should have been backdated for 3 years. Wayne Wallis noted that he has received no such advice.

PSC to ascertain whether rate reductions are to be backdated

Phil Blanch noted advice from a Hunter River fisher that he has not received any paperwork from DPI. Phil to liaise with Glenda Briggs so that enquiries can be made.

DPI to check arrangements regarding notifications to the identified Fisher

Phil Blanch sought clarification as to whether there are any stored frozen aquatic samples, including prawns, that are yet to be analysed; the details of prawn samples included in the HHRA; and will more testing be completed prior to decisions around closures.

DPI to followup on HHRA prawn sample information, any outstanding stored aquatic samples and any future testing to inform decisions around closures.

Nick Marshall asked for a status on the mass spectrometer. Ed Janson advised that the machine is located with the Office of Environment and Heritage which is getting the equipment up and running.

Ed Janson to obtain progress report from OEH

Lindsay Clout confirmed that he has received correspondence from the Office of Environment and Heritage regarding the drainage problems on Maria's Farm.

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CRG Review

The Chair advised the CRG that the Terms of Reference commits to a formal review at six months. However, the review was not timely at that stage given the impending release of the Environmental Site Assessment and Human Health Risk Assessment July/August 2016. As the reports have been delivered, a formal independent review should not take place.

At the time of his departure at 6pm Don Burgoyne remarked that he considered the CRG to be productive until the last few months and is now being railroaded by particular community groups. Cain Gorfine later commented that he has seen no change to the efficiency of the CRG. Phil Blanch noted that the CRG needs to have a limit on people's questions.

Herald Correction

The Chair distributed a correction notice by the Newcastle Herald on 17 August 2016 regarding their report on 15 August 2016 that there had never been testing for PFOS in the groundwater between the northern boundary of the Williamtown RAAF base and Campvale Pumping Station. However, tests on a Hunter Water pumping station between the base and Campvale in May 2012 returned a non-detect for PFOS. A second bore between the north west corner of the base and Grahamstown Dam returned a non-detect for PFOS last year.

8. Future meetings

As the final decision on the enHealth values will be provided to the Federal Minister for Health on 31 August 2016, the next meeting should be held with sufficient time for both Defence and the Expert Panel to provide feedback to the CRG and the wider community.

Meeting closed Meeting closed 6.30pm

Next meeting: The next meeting will be held on 8 September 2016 from 3.30pm to 6.30pm.