

Draft Minutes 8 October 2015

Meeting:	Williamtown Contamination Investigation Community Reference Group (CRG)	Date: 8 October 2015
Location:	Newcastle Airport Boardroom	Time: 4:00 to 6:05 pm
Number:	1502	
Chairperson:	Bill Tatnell Snr Regional Coordinator Department of Premier & Cabinet (DPC)	
Attendees:	The Hon. Mark Speakman MP NSW Minister for the Environment + support staff	
	The Hon. Darren Chester MP Federal Assistant Minister for Defence + support staff	
	Scot MacDonald Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter	
	Professor Mary O’Kane NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer + support staff	
	Barry Buffier Chair and CEO Environmental Protection Authority + support staff	
	Air Commodore Steve Roberton RAAF Williamtown Department of Defence	
	Steve Grzeskowiak Estate and Infrastructure Group Department of Defence	
	Alison Clifton Estate and Infrastructure Group Department of Defence	
	Stacey Hannon Estate and Infrastructure Group Department of Defence	
	Adam Gilligan Manager Hunter Region Environment Protection Authority	
	Wayne Wallis General Manager Port Stephens Council	
	Ian Lyall Manager Aquaculture Department of Primary Industries	
	Prof David Durrheim Director Health Protection Hunter New England Local Health District	
	Jodie Calvert Asst. Regional Coordinator (Secretariat) DPC	
	Aaron Spadaro Regional Liaison Officer (Secretariat support) DPC	
	Rhianna Gorfine Joint Spokesperson, Williamtown and Surrounds Residents Action Group Community Member	
	Lyndsay Clout President, Fullerton Cove Action Group & Williamtown Salt Ash Flood Group Community Member	

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

Robert Gauta | Manager, Commercial Fisherman's Coop | Community Member

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

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

Cornelius Disselkoen | Maria's Vegetable Farm | Community Member

Apologies: Cain Gorfine | President, Williamtown and Surrounds Residents Action Group | Community Member

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

Action List

Number	Action Item	Responsible	Due Date
1502-1	Updated EPA Response Plan to be forwarded to DPC for distribution to members.	EPA	12/10/2015
	Key messaging to be determined with regard to extension of investigation area. This to be incorporated into a media strategy	EPA	12/10/2015
1502-2	Action List from meeting 1 to be updated as per discussion	DPC	12/10/2015
1502-3	Defence to provide feedback on current base construction works being undertaken and how meeting environmental standards.	Defence	15/10/2015
1502-4	Defence to review process for returning water testing results to individuals.	Defence	15/10/2015
1502-5	Defence to liaise with Assistant Minister's office to obtain feedback to DPI on fishing industry financial supports.	Defence	15/10/2015
1502-6	HNE Health to consider the best approach for delivery of counselling services.	HNE Health	15/10/2015
1502-7	DPC to progress key messaging / communication strategy with EPA, in conjunction with Defence and Community members	DPC/EPA	15/10/2015

Number	Action Item	Responsible	Due Date
1502-8	Defence to consider establishing a community drop-in centre with support from NSW response agencies.	Defence/NSW agencies	13/10/2015

Meeting minutes

Item / Issue	Response	Decision
1. Endorsement of Minutes	Endorsed.	To be uploaded on EPA website
2. Actions List	Accepted	To be updated regarding comments on outstanding items
3. Response Plan (EPA)	<p>EPA has received the CRG Issues Log and have cross-matched that with the Response Plan. Some surface water sampling results have been received resulting in the need to extend investigation area from the red zone further to the east towards Tilligerry Creek. Further detailed analysis is required. A revised map is currently being developed.</p> <p>A request was made from the community members to include information/messaging that will alleviate community concerns related to extending the investigation area.</p>	<p>Updated response plan to be forwarded to DPC for distribution to members.</p> <p>Key messaging to be provided with regard to extension of investigation area – see <i>Item 6 Communication Strategy</i></p>
4. Opening Remarks	Opening remarks were provided by the Hon. Mark Speakman MP, NSW Minister for the Environment, NSW Chief Scientist Mary O'Kane and the Commonwealth Assistant Minister for Defence, the Hon Darren Chester MP.	Support from community and CRG noted, with the community members expressing their appreciation at the end of the meeting for their attendance.
5. Concerns raised by community members:		
Continuation of earthworks on base near Moore's Drain and intrusion into the water table.	Defence noted that works are being carried out in accordance with approved environment impact statements, but noted the issues raised and would investigate the matter for response.	Defence to provide feedback on works being undertaken and how meeting environmental standards.

Item / Issue	Response	Decision
How can the community be assured that policies and procedures are in place for disposal of current firefighting foams in use	Firefighting foams currently used are disposed of in accordance with environmental standards, with treatment and disposal currently contained within the RAAF base site in accordance with accredited processes. A description of how this is occurring should be incorporated into key messaging to the community to alleviate concerns about current practices	
What is happening on-base to contain and remediate the contaminant?	This is a priority to Defence and it is EPAs expectation that the source of contamination will be addressed with the issue being referred to the Expert Panel. Defence has now been appointed as an observer of this Panel.	
Taking into account the life-span of the contaminants, why is baseline testing not being done?	<p>Human blood levels of PFOS/PFOA do not predict future or current health risk.</p> <p>Global studies to date have not confirmed causality between PFOS/PFOA exposure and specific human diseases. However, the International Agency for Cancer Research has classified PFOA as a possible carcinogen (Class 2B). PFOA has not yet been classified. Thus a precautionary approach is indicated.</p> <p>A Health Risk Assessment will be undertaken as part of the Response Plan. It is important to understand the pathways of human exposure which will lead to measures being implemented to reduce exposure into the future. Ongoing monitoring will also be important to determine changes over time.</p>	
What is the use of these contaminants by other large industries in the region (eg. aluminium smelters, liquid fuel depots, other heavy industry)	EPA acknowledged the importance of this question and advises other sites with flammable liquids are now being looked at with regard to current practices.	
Access to sampling results for the community	<p>It was agreed that the community should be able to access any results of testing that they have submitted to. The community need to have a better understanding of how this can be achieved.</p> <p>It was acknowledged that dissemination of information is a major issue and needed to be addressed through a communication strategy – see Item 6 below.</p>	Defence to review process for returning water testing results to individuals.
6. Agency reporting by exception	<p><u>Defence:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have now joined as an observer of the Expert Panel. 	Noted

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Health Risk Assessment will be undertaken in conjunction with NSW Health, EPA and other NSW agencies. 43 resident bore water surveys received back to date. <p><u>DPI:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sale of farmed oysters recommenced on Wednesday 7 October. Ban on recreational and commercial fishing has been extended till 31 October. Sampling still being undertaken. DPI fee waiver extended for commercial fishers. Brand damage – this issue needs to be considered in all communication strategies. Concerns regarding industry member access to financial support and Centrelink payments – this has been discussed with Assistant Minister Darren Chester who has agreed to provide feedback to DPI on the matter. <p><u>Health:</u> Discussions have begun with Mental Health Services to explore what additional support can be provided to the community, as required.</p>	<p>Defence to liaise with Assistant Minister's office to obtain feedback to DPI on fishing industry financial supports.</p> <p>HNE Health to consider the best approach for delivery of counselling services.</p>
7. Communication to the Community	<p>Communicating actions / progress is vital to the community – how is this to be done?</p> <p>Discussion held as to how to link with community in the most appropriate ways.</p> <p><u>Suggestions:</u> Community 'drop-in' centre concept to be considered (as utilised in the past at Fullerton Cove in response to coal seam gas issues). Could be manned / supported on a voluntary basis.</p> <p>Defence have had discussions about setting up a tent to provide information and discuss issues with the community. This could be expanded to include other key organisations and government agencies. EPA advised they will provide resources to assist.</p> <p>Lindsay Clout offered a site location to set up a community information hub at Fullerton Cove.</p> <p>Key messaging to be advertised more broadly and to be considered within a more formalised communication strategy – community interviews, press releases, etc.</p>	<p>DPC to progress 'grass roots' communication strategy with EPA in conjunction with Defence and Community members.</p> <p>Defence to consider establishing a community drop-in centre with support from NSW response agencies.</p>

Minutes

Meeting closed 6:05 pm

Next meeting 4:00 to 6:00 pm Thursday 15 October at Newcastle Airport Training Room.