

Endorsed Minutes

12 November 2015

Meeting:	Williamtown Contamination Investigation Community Reference Group (CRG)	Date: 12 November 2015
Location:	Newcastle Airport Board Room	Time: 4:00 to 6:05pm
Number:	1506	
Chairperson:	Jodie Calvert A/Senior Regional Coordinator Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC)	
Secretariat:	Aaron Spadaro A/Asst Regional Coordinator DPC	
Attendees:	Adam Gilligan Manager Hunter Region Environment Protection Authority (EPA)	
	Jeremy Hillman Senior Stakeholder and Communications Officer EPA (telephone)	
	Ian Lyall Manager Aquaculture Department of Primary Industries (Fisheries)	
	Glenda Briggs Regional Manager Department of Primary Industries	
	Wayne Wallis General Manager Port Stephens Council	
	Air Vice Marshal Greg Evans Department of Defence	
	Mark Doughty Department of Defence	
	Lyndsay Clout President, Fullerton Cove Action Group & Williamtown Salt Ash Flood Group	
	Rhianna Gorfine Co-Convenor, Williamtown and Surrounds Residents Action Group	
	Don Burgoyne NSW Farmer's Association Community Member & Oyster Farmer	
	Robert Gauta Manager, Commercial Fisherman's Coop	
Apologies:	Scot MacDonald Parliamentary Secretary for Hunter & Central Coast	
	Bill Tatnell Senior Regional Co-ordinator DPC	
	Prof David Durrheim Director Health Protection Hunter New England Local Health District	
	Maureen Greet Department of Defence	
	Cornelius Disselkoen Maria's Vegetable Farm Community Member	
	Justin Hamilton Fullerton Cove Action Group & Williamtown Salt Ash Flood Group	

Cain Gorfine | President, Williamtown and Surrounds Residents Action Group

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

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

Number	Action Item	Responsible	Due Date
1506-1	Provide feedback on the fishers' financial assistance package to relevant Government decision makers.	Defence	ASAP
1506-2	Investigate how best to measure flow-on business impacts	PSC (Economic Development)	ASAP
1506-3	Develop an approach to deliver Sampling and Quality Plan information for future community drop-in events.	Defence, EPA	ASAP
1506-4	Update CRG on site dewatering and soil movement issues.	Defence, EPA, Council	26 Nov 2015
1506-5	Distribute community drop-in event advertisements to CRG for wide distribution through networks.	EPA, DPC	16 Nov 2015
1506-6	Distribute outcomes of Expert Panel consideration of new US EPA tolerable daily intake standard to CRG as soon as available.	EPA, DPC	ASAP
1506-7	Supply to AVM Evans names/details of residents awaiting Defence sampling following initial contact.	Community representatives	ASAP
1506-8	Provide feedback to Premier's Office via Parliamentary Secretary on community calls for greater presence of elected leaders in the Williamtown and surrounding communities.	DPC	ASAP
1506-9	Coordinate timely distribution of updated FAQs to CRG as soon as available, involving use of social media channels through CRG membership where possible.	EPA	Ongoing
1506-10	Follow up AECOM test bore sampling activities and report back to CRG.	Defence	26 Nov 2015

Meeting minutes

Item / Issue	Response	Decision
2. Endorsement of Minutes	Endorsed	Noted

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2.1 Actions List	<p>Short to medium term financial assistance initiatives and longer term compensation considerations (1502-5, 1504-5, 1504-7, 1504-8)</p> <p>Defence notes that financial assistance to commercial fishers is administered by the Commonwealth Department of Human Services (DHS) and Centrelink.</p> <p>Oyster industry representatives raised the need to expand the assistance eligibility into other areas of agriculture, including land-based and oyster farmers who are both suffering from reputational damage, and the need to escalate these concerns.</p> <p>Community representatives raised the issue of compensation or assistance to other local business indirectly impacted, noting loss of business in nursery sales, as an example. The difficulties in accurately measuring loss of indirect business were noted.</p> <p>Community representatives also expressed concern over political comments in the media that class action is the only means to achieve real compensation.</p> <p>DHS and Centrelink will be on hand at upcoming community drop in events and in the Centrelink office at Raymond Terrace to receive business claims.</p> <p>Developing a plan and fact sheets for communicating Defence's Sampling and Quality Plan linked to the Stage 2B Investigation (1503-3, 1503-4, 1504-6, 1505-1, 1505-4)</p> <p>Defence noted continuing discussions with the EPA and Expert Panel regarding finalisation of a forward sampling program for the Stage 2B environmental investigation, but that a resolution is progressing. The sampling program aims to provide the level of data needed to produce a robust Human Health Risk Assessment – getting it right is the reason for the delay.</p> <p>While negotiations are ongoing, Defence is continuing with its sampling program based on their current proposal of more than 900 samples.</p> <p>NSW Department of Primary Industries notes that seafood sampling and testing has been for progressing for over two weeks.</p> <p>Community representatives want to know how residents can be included in Defence's sampling program. EPA advises sampling will prioritise known human health exposure pathways, meaning a highly targeted water, soil and animal product sampling program.</p>	<p>Defence to provide feedback on the package to relevant Government decision makers.</p> <p>Port Stephens Council is investigating how best to measure business impacts through their Economic Development Unit, noting a possible future role for the Small Business Commission in providing support services.</p> <p>Defence and EPA to discuss how best to deliver Sampling and Quality Plan information for community drop in.</p>

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	<p>Suggested preparing a Stage 2B information flyer for community drop in day. Information from website hit analytics through website may also provide useful insight into the effectiveness of web-based information dissemination.</p> <p>Development site dewatering and soil movement (1503-6)</p> <p>Community representatives noted that development is ongoing in the investigation area, and asked if retrospective restrictions are being applied. EPA notes retrospective dewatering requirements being considered, but existing legal levers primarily apply to new development.</p> <p>Defence is also working on a treatment and remediation regime for water and soil sourced from the RAAF base. This practice will be implemented as part of current base developments under way.</p> <p>Port Stephens Council has commenced notification of sites as being part of the contamination investigation area through Section 149 planning certificates. Council is also seeking advice from the EPA on whether further notification of individual sites as 'registered contaminated sites' is required.</p> <p>Six Section 149(2) certificates have been issued since the time of the investigation commenced. A further six Section 149(5) certificates have been issued without the notification of the contamination investigation and will be notified.</p> <p>EPA discussions with Council and Defence are continuing.</p> <p>Community drop in event, Salt Ash, 19 November (1504-3)</p> <p>Event to include visits from Professor Mary O'Kane (NSW Chief Scientist), and Professor Alison Jones to provide clinical support and advice to individuals seeking health advice for themselves and dependents.</p> <p>Advice will be available from the NSW Small Business Commission, from Centrelink regarding income support applications from commercial fishers. Red Cross psychological first aid and further financial counselling supports from Samaritans will also be available.</p>	<p>EPA, Council and Defence to update CRG on site dewatering and soil movement issues at next meeting.</p> <p>EPA and DPC to distribute event advertisement to CRG for wide distribution through networks.</p>

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	<p>Defence to consider CRG receipt of de-identified sample results (1505-2)</p> <p>Defence advises that the public release of individual results is not possible. Broader area mapping summarising outcomes will be prepared, but there will be some time before this can be delivered. Any release of summarised sample result information will not alter health advice.</p> <p>Numeric summaries highlighting the quantum of positive and negative results will continue to be provided at CRG meetings, which are welcomed by community and industry representatives.</p> <p>DPI noted that oyster and seafood results mapping is available.</p>	
<p>3. Defence coordinator's introductory remarks and update</p>	<p>Air Vice Marshal (AVM) Greg Evans was introduced as Defence's newly appointed local response coordinator and spokesperson in relation to the Williamstown contamination investigation. AVM Evans will also play a broader role coordinating the Defence responses in relation to RAAF installations throughout Australia.</p> <p>AVM Evans notes that remediation needs on base are a key design element in Stage 2B plans, highlighting that Defence has developed a good understanding of remediation of water and soil for on-site movements within RAAF base</p> <p>Defence has confirmed that five positive detection results have been hand delivered to landowners by AVM Evans. This brings the total number of positive detections of PFOS/PFOA so far to seven. The total number of tests which have recorded 'nil detections' for PFOA/PFOS now stands at 41.</p> <p>His personal delivery of sample result letters will continue. Feedback received is that the personal approach is appreciated.</p>	
<p>4. Environmental Protection Authority update</p>	<p>The Chief Scientist's website now has new advice covering new information released by the United States EPA, which puts in place higher tolerable daily intake (TDI) thresholds for PFOS and PFOA. Current health advisories are based on European standard. The proposed US standard is to be reviewed by the Expert Panel and its Risk Assessment Working Group, but in the interim, there are no changes to current health advisories.</p>	<p>EPA and DPC to distribute outcomes of Expert Panel consideration of new US EPA tolerable daily intake standard to CRG as soon as available.</p>

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5. Reports from other agencies	<p>Department of Primary Industries</p> <p>NSW DPI has received feedback from commercial fishers on the financial assistance package on offer with a significant number of process and eligibility issues raised. NSW DPI is meeting with DHS to resolve process issues.</p> <p>Preliminary results of the NSW DPI first round of fish sampling program are finalised and have been posted to the EPA website.</p> <p>Sampling of school prawns finalised last week, with the outcomes of analysis for consumption expected imminently. Sample collection is ongoing for 10 further species from across the Hunter and Port Stephens estuaries, including from two control environments.</p> <p>Rural Adversity Mental Health Program counsellor Sarah Green has identified need for targeted assistance to commercial fishers and broader issues of mental health concerns in Williamstown and surrounding communities. Defence reiterated advice from NSW Health for the community to approach their GP in order to receive holistic health support. DPC emphasised Red Cross and other counselling supports available at the community event can advise on how best to traverse GP and referral processes.</p> <p>DPI also highlights need to emphasise drop-in nature of event through proposed advertising, opposed to being a meeting.</p> <p>Industry representatives advised that commercial loans against fisher's shares in the Newcastle Cooperative are available and being promoted. Funds and resources are also being made available through the Sydney Fish Market, Newcastle Cooperative and Port Stephens Council for local seafood brand promotion activities. Council's support is particularly acknowledged by the CRG.</p>	
6. Community feedback and issues	<p>Port Stephens Council</p> <p>Council advised that free financial counselling for individuals and businesses is being promoted, but has generally not been taken up so far. Promotion on community group Facebook pages is suggested by community representatives.</p> <p>Council have developed a marketing campaign for local seafood, which has been promoted through the Premier and the Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter.</p>	

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	<p>Involvement from the NSW Governor was also suggested.</p> <p>Water rebates from Hunter Water and easy payment options for Council rates are also being promoted.</p> <p>Council are also pushing for connection to reticulated water for properties in Williamtown, Salt Ash and Fullerton Cove. Hunter Water is capable of delivering, but a resolution is being sought at the political level on who should fund the works.</p> <p>Community Correspondence received from Justin Hamilton seeking clarification for Defence's plans to undertake sampling and test of private bores in areas outside the investigation zone, citing approaches Defence to arrange on-site testing not being followed through at the times arranged. Community representatives highlight multiple similar experiences amongst residents in Salt Ash and Fullerton Cove. Improved Defence liaison and contact with residents is needed.</p> <p>Community CRG representatives are seeking greater on-ground presence and support from politicians for their communities through the investigation.</p> <p>Correspondence was received from a local resident regarding the disposal of contaminated eggs. EPA advised they can be disposed of safely through general waste. This is addressed in the latest version of the FAQs.</p> <p>Water monitoring wells being established on street verges and near homes by Defence's consultants AECOM. No-one can answer what they are for, nor why locations chosen.</p> <p>Industry Fishing industry representatives advise that while not completely happy with income replacement arrangements, commercial fishers are happy with acknowledgment of their concerns through the assistance package delivered.</p>	<p>Community representatives to supply to AVM Evans names of residents awaiting Defence sampling following initial contact.</p> <p>DPC to provide feedback to Premier's Office via Parliamentary Secretary</p> <p>EPA to coordinate distribution of updated FAQs for distribution to CRG as soon as available, including use of social media channels through CRG membership.</p> <p>Defence to follow up AECOM sampling activities and report back to CRG.</p>
7. Other business	Nil	
8. Future meetings	Next meeting to be held 26 November.	

Meeting closed 6.05pm

Next meeting 4:00 to 6:00 pm Thursday 26 October at Newcastle Airport Boardroom.