



## **MEETING No. 44**

### **Newcastle Community Consultative Committee on the Environment (NCCCE)**

#### **Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** 19 October 2016 **Time:** 5.30 pm

**File:** EF13/8273

**Location:** EPA Office, 117 Bull Street, Newcastle

**In attendance:** Members: John Tate (Chair), Andrew Baxter (City of Newcastle), Rick Banyard (Community), A/Prof Howard Bridgman (Minister's Community Nominee), Keith Craig (Community), Dr Craig Dalton (NSW Health), Rebecca Johnston (alternate delegate for Michael Dowzer, industry), Peter Kibble (Industry), John Mackenzie (Environment), Sherree Woodroffe (Industry)

Adam Gilligan (EPA Manager Hunter), Leanne Graham (EPA Project Officer)

Presenters/Visitors: Clair Cameron (EPA Director Stakeholder Engagement and Communication), Hamish Rutherford (EPA Senior Operations Officer), Jaimie Potts (Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH), Senior Environmental Officer), Dr Rebecca Swanson (OEH Environmental Officer)

**Apologies:** Michael Dowzer (Industry), Matt Riley (OEH)

#### **Meeting Record**

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Meeting Details</b>
<b>Item 1</b>	<b>Welcome</b> The Chair welcomed attendees and introduced guest presenters and visitors.
<b>Item 2</b>	<b>Apologies</b> As above.
<b>Item 3</b>	<b>Hunter River Health – Water Quality Monitoring</b> The Lower Hunter River Health Monitoring Program was undertaken by the OEH and funded partly by an Environmental Service Order arising from the prosecution of Orica for pollution incidents in 2010-2011.  Dr Swanson presented the findings of the program, including the following key messages. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A literature and data review, to assess the past and current condition of the lower Hunter River estuary, found a lack of recent water quality data.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project monitored ambient water quality in whole estuary, from its tidal limits to the ocean. Stormwater quality was monitored in the lower estuary, including the river's north and south arms around Kooragang Island and the port. A preliminary ecological assessment examined the impacts of excessive soil sediments and plant nutrients on algal growth, vegetation and fish species.</li> <li>The project found that water quality in the estuary had improved in the past decade, due to a reduction in industrial discharges, better regulation of discharges and remediation of contaminated lands and sediments, and improved management of runoff from agricultural land.</li> </ul> <p>Mr Gilligan noted that the assessment guidelines for water pollutants referred to health impacts on ecology, rather than human health. Beachwatch programs, the key guide for swimmers, generally reports very good water quality.</p> <p>Mr Rutherford summarised the collaborative work of the EPA and industries to reduce the volume and improve the quality of water discharged by major industries around Port of Newcastle. Pollution reduction programs include greater recycling and treatment of effluent, automatic stormwater sampling, onsite bunding and drainage upgrades to capture water runoff, vehicle wheel washing and water recycling and the removal of uncovered bulk material stockpiles.</p> <p>The Committee commended the OEH on the scope of the program and the technical expertise evident in the methodology.</p> <p>The Committee discussed options for the public release of the final reports and made the following recommendations.</p> <p><b>Recommendation 1. That the EPA facilitates a media briefing on the final report of the Lower Hunter River Health Monitoring Program, by Friday 9 December 2016.</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation 2. That the EPA releases a media statement when the final report of the Lower Hunter River Health Monitoring Program is published by the Office of Environment and Heritage.</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation 3. That the EPA facilitates a public information session on the findings of the Lower Hunter River Health Monitoring Program and the EPA's response, in early 2017.</b></p> <p>The Chair commended the OEH on the program and thanked Dr Swanson for the comprehensive presentation.</p>
<b>Item 4</b>	<p><b>Minutes from Previous Meeting (20 July 2016)</b></p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting were adopted as a true and accurate record.</p>
<b>Item 5</b>	<p><b>Actions Arising from Previous Meetings summary</b></p> <p><u>Meeting No.43 (20Jul16) Action 1.</u> Progressing. The EPA and the OEH Information Technology branch are working to develop a mobile-enabled web application to show the location and environmental performance of local industries. NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service provides examples of web enabled interactive maps.</p>



	<p><u>Meeting No.43 (20Jul16) Action 4. Update.</u> A/Prof Bridgman recommended that the Committee invites Professor Paul Dastoor, of the University of Newcastle, to give a presentation on the use of a helium-based scanning electron microscope, to identify the composition of particulate matter in Newcastle.</p> <p>The EPA advised that Actions 2 and 3 and Actions 5 to 8 from the previous meeting were completed or would be addressed in following agenda items.</p> <p><u>Meeting No.43 (20Jul16) Recommendation 1:</u> The OEH added notes to the air quality newsletters for autumn and winter, to explain how to read wind rose and pollution rose diagrams.</p> <p><u>Meeting No.43 (20Jul16) Recommendation 2:</u> The OEH will comment on any variations in the wind pattern at Wallsend compared with other sites, in future air quality newsletters.</p>
<b>Item 6</b>	<p><b>Air Quality in Newcastle: Winter 2016</b></p> <p>Mr Gilligan noted the key points in the Newcastle air quality newsletter for winter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air quality in Newcastle and the Lower Hunter from 1 June 2016 to 31 August 2016 was good in terms of the NSW Air Quality Index.</li> <li>• On all days, levels of particulate matter PM<sub>10</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub>, NO<sub>2</sub>, SO<sub>2</sub> and ammonia were all below benchmark concentrations.</li> <li>• In the previous winter season (winter 2015) PM<sub>10</sub> levels were over the benchmark on one day at Carrington and on three days at Stockton,</li> <li>• In the previous winter seasons, PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels were over the benchmark on one day at Newcastle, Carrington, Mayfield and Beresfield, in winter 2015. Stockton recorded three days in 2015 and 2013 and no days over the benchmark in 2014.</li> <li>• The Newcastle region experienced 'average' to 'above average' rainfall during winter 2016. The winds were typically from the north-west.</li> <li>• Regarding the good air quality results at Stockton, Orica advised that it ceased to use the No. 2 ammonium nitrate plant's dry section in August 2015 and has continued to improve the environmental performance of the prill tower operations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action 1. The EPA to facilitate a briefing to the Committee, in early 2017, to report on the particle characterisation of PM<sub>2.5</sub> samples collected during winter at Stockton in 2016 and 2015, and to include a comparison with results from 2014.</b></p> <p>Committee members endorsed the report and noted the significant improvement in air quality during winter 2016, compared to previous winters.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Mr Gilligan for the presentation.</p>
<b>Item 7</b>	<p><b>Newcastle Air Quality Monitoring Network – Budget Report</b></p> <p>Mr Gilligan reminded the Committee that Newcastle Local Air Quality Monitoring Network (NLAQMN) is operated by the NSW Government and funded by Newcastle's major industries that emit air pollutants.</p> <p>The presentation included the following key messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The total cost of operating the network includes the costs of monitoring particulate matter, oxides of nitrogen and sulfur dioxide and managing the network.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Industries cover the operating costs of the network by contributing funds annually, in proportion to their emissions.</li> <li>The Protection of the Environment Operations (General) Regulation 2009 specifies the methods for determining emissions and calculating annual levies.</li> <li>The NLAQMN Income and Expenditure Statement for 2015/16 reported the differences between the Forecast Budget (estimated before the start of the financial year) and the Actual Budget (calculated at the end of financial year).</li> <li>The total expenditure for 2015/16 was \$303,458, which included the costs of running and maintaining the monitoring instruments and their infrastructure and the salary costs of the technical and administrative officers</li> <li>The NLAQMN Forecast Budget for 2016/17 presented estimates for income and expenditure, for the Committee's consideration and comment.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee supported the forecast budget for 2016/17 and the timeline for discussing the budget with the committee.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Mr Gilligan for the presentation.</p> <p><b>Action 2. The EPA will discuss with the Committee the cost estimates and actual expenditure for the operation of the Newcastle Local Air Quality Monitoring Network, in line with the budget cycle for each financial year.</b></p>
Item 8	<p><b>EPA Stakeholder Survey Update</b></p> <p>Ms Cameron acknowledged the Committee's participation in the EPA's first Stakeholder Survey in 2013 and the Committee Evaluation Survey in 2015. The surveys sought feedback, from the community, industries holding Environment Protection Licences and businesses, on how the EPA could communicate better.</p> <p>In 2016-2017, the EPA will conduct a second Stakeholder Survey of the EPA's community consultative committees, industries and businesses. The objectives of the survey include identifying stakeholders' sources of knowledge about the EPA; perceptions of the EPA's performance; preferred methods of receiving communications from the EPA; and perceptions of emerging issues.</p> <p>In coming months, the EPA will invite committee members to participate in surveys and face to face interviews.</p> <p><b>Action 3: The EPA to keep the Committee informed on the EPA's Stakeholder Survey 2016-2017.</b></p> <p>The Chair thanked Ms Cameron.</p>
Item 9	<p><b>Indoor Air Quality</b></p> <p>Associate Professor Howard Bridgman gave a presentation on indoor air quality, responding to Action 7 from the previous meeting.</p> <p>The presentation included the following key messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People generally spend 90% their lifestyles indoors.</li> <li>Carbon monoxide, mainly from unflued gas heaters and gas stoves, is colourless, odourless, poisonous and can potentially have health effects.</li> <li>Nitrogen dioxide, mainly from gas stoves, can cause respiratory health problems.</li> <li>Particulate matter, as PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>, from domestic solid fuel combustion and outdoor sources can cause respiratory and heart problems.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>House dust, domestic animals and insects, fungi and moulds are sources of allergens.</li> <li>Paints and varnishes release hydrocarbons.</li> <li>Indoor air pollutants can accumulate to cause sick building syndrome. Individual personal responses vary. Symptoms include respiratory problems, headaches, nausea and rashes.</li> <li>The effects of indoor pollutants can be minimised by increasing ventilation via improved building and window design and air conditioning.</li> </ul> <p>In conclusion, A/Prof Bridgman emphasised that, while indoor air is a mix of pollutants from indoor and outdoor sources, people may be exposed to higher concentrations of air pollutants indoors, rather than outdoors.</p> <p>In response to questions, A/Prof Bridgman confirmed that air fresheners and colognes release hydrocarbon vapours that can accumulate in poorly ventilated areas. Formaldehyde vapours from building materials and furnishings can accumulate in new buildings.</p> <p>The Chair thanked A/Prof Bridgman for the informative presentation.</p>
<b>Item 10</b>	<p><b>EPA Update on Local Environment Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Williamstown groundwater contamination</b></li> </ul> <p>Mr Gilligan confirmed that the Department of Primary Industries advised that the fishing closures in Tilligerry Creek and Fullerton Cove were lifted on 1 October 2016, with an ongoing restriction placed on dusky flathead caught by commercial fishers.</p> <p>Locally caught seafood is safe to eat. However, people who source and eat large amounts from a single location, such as fishers and local residents, may wish to limit the number of servings of individual species.</p> <p>Recommended levels of maximum intake are available on the EPA website.</p> <p><b>Action 4. The EPA to circulate to the Committee the link to recommended levels of maximum intake of seafood from the Williamstown area.</b></p>
<b>Item 11</b>	<p><b>Community Feedback</b></p> <p>The Chair invited Committee members to report on feedback received from their contact networks since the previous meeting.</p> <p>Mr Banyard advised that the Correct Planning and Consultation for Mayfield Group (CPCFM) met with the Australian Rail and Track Corporation (ARTC) to discuss fugitive coal emissions in the rail corridor. The CPCFM presented the ARTC with ten recommendations to reduce fugitive coal emissions. The CPCFM planned to report to the EPA on 21 October 2016 on the meeting with the ARTC.</p> <p>The Chair advised that he met with ARTC independently to discuss fugitive coal emissions in the rail corridor.</p> <p><b>Action 5. The EPA to invite the ARTC to give a briefing about actions to reduce fugitive coal emissions in the Hunter rail corridor, at the next Committee meeting.</b></p>

	The Chair thanked the Committee members for their contributions and commended members' on their participation in the work of the Committee during this calendar year.
<b>Item 12</b>	<b>Next Meeting</b> Tentatively, 15 February 2017
<b>Meeting ended at 8.20 pm</b>	

<b>ACTION ITEM LOG</b> <b>NCCCE MEETING NO. 44, 19 Oct 2016</b>	<b>DUE</b>	<b>RESP</b>
<b>Recommendation 1.</b> That the EPA facilitates a media briefing on the final report of the Lower Hunter River Health Monitoring Program, by Friday 9 December 2016.	9/12/16	
<b>Recommendation 2.</b> That the EPA releases a media statement when the final report of the Lower Hunter River Health Monitoring Program is published by the Office of Environment and Heritage.	9/12/16	
<b>Recommendation 3.</b> That the EPA facilitates a public information session on the findings of the Lower Hunter River Health Monitoring Program and the EPA's response, in early 2017.	Early 2017	
<b>Action 1.</b> The EPA to facilitate a briefing to the Committee, in early 2017, to report on the particle characterisation of PM2.5 samples collected during winter at Stockton in 2016 and 2015, and to include a comparison with results from 2014.	Early 2017	EPA
<b>Action 2.</b> The EPA will discuss with the Committee the cost estimates and actual expenditure for the operation of the Newcastle Local Air Quality Monitoring Network, in line with the budget cycle for each financial year.	Ongoing	EPA
<b>Action 3.</b> The EPA to keep the Committee informed on the EPA's Stakeholder Survey 2016-2017,	As available	EPA
<b>Action 4.</b> The EPA to circulate to the Committee the link to recommended levels of maximum intake of seafood from the Williamstown area.	15/02/17	EPA
<b>Action 5.</b> The EPA to invite the ARTC to give a briefing about actions to reduce fugitive coal emissions in the Hunter rail corridor, at the next Committee meeting.	ASAP	EPA