



## MEETING MINUTES

**Date:** 24 March 2011

**Time:** 10am – 2pm

**File:** FIL08/6990-09

**Meeting Location:** Muswellbrook.

### **Meeting 4 of the Upper Hunter Air Quality Monitoring Network (UHAQMN) – Advisory Committee**

**In attendance:** Cathy Cole (Chairperson), Martin Addinall, Wayne Bedggood, Scott Brooks, Craig Dalton, Craig Flemming, Bruce Foster, Chris Hargood, Lyn McBain, Kenneth McDonald, Patrice Newell, Carol Russel, Wendy Wales, John Watson.

Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH): Mitchell Bennett, Alan Betts, Grahame Clarke, Chris Eiser, Jason Potts.

**Apologies:** Rory Gordon (Bruce Foster replacing), Nicholas Hall (Scott Brooks replacing), John Neely (Martin Addinall replacing).

#### **Agenda Item:**

##### **1. Acknowledgement of Country.**

##### **2. Apologies (see above).**

The chair welcomed Chris Hargood from Upper Hunter Shire Council following David Casson's resignation, and Craig Flemming from Muswellbrook Council following Chris Gidney's retirement.

##### **3. Minutes of Previous Meeting.**

The Advisory Committee minutes from meeting held on 4 February 2011, were adopted.

##### **4. Actions Arising from Previous Meeting.**

- The Chairperson summarised the actions from the previous meeting. OEH advised that an updated folio of sites had not yet been developed. All other actions would be dealt with under items listed on the Meeting 4 Agenda.
- Department of Planning and Infrastructure advised that it could not require a new mine to establish a new monitor as part of OEH's network because an approval condition can only be applied to the proponent, not to OEH. The proponent could not comply with such a condition because OEH may not agree to accept the monitor

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into the network. However, OEH noted that it is consulted in the approval process and would seek the advice of the Committee when assessing any new mine proposals that warranted the establishment of a new monitoring site.

- The committee discussed potential future monitoring needs in the context of mining development (eg around Denman) and the Committee's advisory role regarding a regulatory framework (Function 5).

## **5. Web Development Project.**

OEH presented a prototype map-based webpage that will be considered by focus groups on 7 April 2011. Users are able to select various backgrounds against which to view data. A seven-day rolling window that graphs hourly data has been developed. Depending on feedback from the focus groups, a working webpage could be available by the end of April 2011.

Some members advised that they had difficulty accessing data from the existing website.

**ACTION 1: OEH to investigate why recent data was unavailable from the website and the function of the “exceedence” search function on the existing website.**

## **6. System Performance.**

OEH reported that from 14 January to 8 March 2011, Singleton data was available for 98-99% of the time. Problems have been experienced with wind speed and direction monitoring equipment at Muswellbrook resulting in 92% data availability. These problems have now been rectified. The particulate matter monitoring equipment at Muswellbrook has been operating consistently since a vacuum pump was replaced in mid-January 2011.

There has been one marginal exceedence of the  $50\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$   $\text{PM}_{10}$  criterion at Singleton on 1 February 2011. This had not initially been identified as an exceedence because the TEOM manufacturer's software reported results that were  $3\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  lower than it should have been. This was rectified with the installation of updated software on 23 February 2011.

In response to questions from the Committee about how exceedences would be dealt with, OEH advised that the NEPM goal acknowledges that the standard of  $50\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  may be exceeded for 5 days per year. It is anticipated that a response protocol will be developed with relevant industries once the network is more fully developed and sufficient data are

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available. In the meantime, OEH and the Department of Planning and Infrastructure will continue surveillance and regulatory actions. OEH noted that so far, recorded particulate matter levels appear to be consistent with other urban areas in the Sydney metropolitan area, but that more data is needed before any meaningful analysis can be carried out.

OEH advised that it would soon be able to differentiate website inquiries for the Upper Hunter. The number of Upper Hunter subscriptions to OEH's SMS health alert system continues to increase.

**ACTION 2: OEH to add automated notification of subscribers into the health alert system.**

### **7. Site Assessment Report.**

OEH presented detailed information on proposed monitoring sites north-west of Muswellbrook, and two potential sites at Aberdeen. The first proposed Aberdeen site, opposite new homes in Abercairney Terrace, is more open, but is likely to have a greater visual impact. The second proposed site is near the Scout hall and SES depot.

The Committee then visited the north-west Muswellbrook and Aberdeen sites, as well as inspecting the monitoring station operating at Bowmans Park in Muswellbrook.

OEH presented detailed information on the proposed monitoring sites south of Singleton and at Warkworth Village.

The Committee advised that precautions will be needed to address the risk of flooding at the site south of Singleton.

The Committee endorsed the proposed sites north-west of Muswellbrook, at Aberdeen near the SES depot, south of Singleton and at Warkworth Village, provided the final approval of the landowners of the Warkworth site is obtained.

**ACTION 3: OEH to proceed with obtaining the necessary approvals and detailed design work for sites north-west of Muswellbrook, at Aberdeen, south of Singleton and at Warkworth Village.**

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## 8. Progress Report

OEH advised that two stations are now running, one at Singleton and the other at Muswellbrook. The Maison Dieu station should be operating by the end of April 2011. A call for tenders for the Camberwell, Bulga, Mount Thorley and north-west of Singleton sites closes on 29 March 2011. A total of seven sites, and stage 2 of the website, should be operating by the end of June 2011.

The sites north-west of Muswellbrook, south of Singleton, and at Aberdeen and Warkworth have now been endorsed. There is in-principle agreement to sites in Merriwa, Jerry's Plains and Wybong, and it is anticipated that detail of these proposed sites will be presented to the next meeting for endorsement. This will keep the project on-track to have all stations operating by the end of 2011.

Some members expressed interest in conducting an out-of-session inspection of the proposed Merriwa site.

## 9. General Business

- OEH distributed recent media articles related to the monitoring network for information.
- Contacts that may be able to assist in locating sites in Wybong, Merriwa and Jerry's Plains were identified.
- OEH confirmed that media releases about the Advisory Committee are issued by OEH in consultation with the Committee chair. Any requests from the media for comment on behalf of the Committee should be forwarded to OEH who will advise the chair. This enables the Chair to interact with the media without having to give out her personal contact details and at a suitable time avoiding conflict with other work constraints.
- It was suggested that community feedback be incorporated as an agenda item for future meetings. OEH advised that the next step in the consultation process would be the distribution of a six-monthly report.

**ACTION 4: OEH to include "community feedback" as an agenda item for all future meetings.**

**ACTION 5: OEH to draft a six-monthly report for consideration at the Committee's next meeting.**

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**ACTION 6: OEH to provide an outline of the process and proposed timetable for the Committee to advise on the remaining functions in the Committee's terms of reference.**

**Next meeting date:**

30 June 2011 in Jerry's Plains.

**Prepared by: Mitchell Bennett (OEH)**

**Reviewed by: Cathy Cole (Chair)**

**Minutes adopted: 30 June 2011**