

MEETING No. 48
Newcastle Community Consultative Committee on the Environment (NCCCE)

Meeting Minutes

Date:	18 October 2017	Time:	5.30 pm
Location:	EPA Office, 117 Bull Street, Newcastle		
Attendees: Committee Members and Guests			
NCCCE:			
John Tate (Chair)			
Dr Craig Dalton (NSW Health)			
Michael Dowzer, (Industry)			
Sherree Woodroffe (Industry)			
Trudie Larnach (Industry)			
A/Prof Howard Bridgman (Minister's Community Nominee)			
Dr John Mackenzie (Environment)			
Keith Craig (Community)			
Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH)			
Scott Thompson, Senior Air Quality Monitoring Officer			
Robert Hynes, Senior Scientist Climate and Atmospheric			
EPA			
Adam Gilligan, Director North Branch			
Steven James, Manager Waste Compliance			
Bianca Morton, Senior Community Engagement Officer			
Apologies:	Andrew Baxter (City of Newcastle)		
Absent:	Rick Banyard (Community)		
	Cynthia Isley (Minister's Community Nominee Deputy)		

Item	Meeting Minutes
1	Welcome

	<p>The Chair welcomed attendees, and read a written letter from Leanne Graham thanking the committee members for all their hard work and dedication, and to feel proud of all their contribution and achievements.</p> <p>The Chair noted that Leanne Graham was very thorough in her work, and much appreciated.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to send a letter of thanks to Leanne.</p> <p>Action Item 1: The EPA will draft a letter on behalf of the Committee to thank Leanne Graham. The EPA will send to Chair for approval and signature.</p>
2	<p>Apologies</p> <p>As above.</p>
3	<p>Minutes from Previous Meeting (17 May 2017)</p> <p>The Committee adopted the draft previous minutes as a true and accurate record.</p>
4	<p>Actions Arising from Previous Meetings summary</p> <p><u>Meeting No. 46 (17 May 2017) Action 4.</u> Update 18/10/17. The EPA will report to the Committee on the actual income and expenditure for operating the network in the financial year 2016-2017, as Agenda Item 11 of today's meeting.</p> <p><u>Meeting No. 46 (17 May 2017) Action 6.</u> Update 18/10/17. The <i>Lower Hunter River Health Monitoring Program</i> report, is now available on the OEH website. Link provided: http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research/lower-hunter-river-health-monitoring-program.htm</p> <p><u>Meeting No. 46 (17 May 2017) Action 7.</u> Update 18/10/17. The Committee would like an update on the EPA funding for contaminated land management. The EPA has no updates to provide at this stage, however once more information is available, the EPA will distribute this. This will remain an action item.</p> <p><u>Meeting No. 47 (19 July 2017) Action 1.</u> Update 18/10/17. The EPA provided the date and link to the Clean Air Society for Australia and New Zealand conference in an email dated 13/10/16. A/Prof Bridgman attended the Conference and confirmed that it went very well. Approximately 35 people attended, with excellent feedback and questions received.</p> <p><u>Meeting No. 47 (19 July 2017) Recommendation 1.</u> Update 18/10/17. The Committee recommended the OEH include graphs showing annual and seasonal trends in PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} in the final Newcastle air quality newsletter for autumn 2017 and in future seasonal newsletters. OEH have adopted this suggestion and is now in place.</p> <p><u>Meeting No. 47 (19 July 2017) Recommendation 2.</u> Update 18/10/17. The Committee recommended the EPA prepares a communications strategy for the Committee's consideration, detailing key messages on air quality, audience groups and costs and benefits of communication channels. The EPA confirmed this is still under development, and has been delayed due to changes in staff. This will remain as a recommendation.</p>
5	<p>Community Feedback</p>

The Chair invited Committee members to report on feedback received from their contact networks since the previous meeting.

Mr Gilligan noted the questions received from Mr Craig via email prior to the meeting, and suggested addressing those first.

Mr Craig raised concerns from the community about the proposed gas storage facilities on Kooragang Island, and possible pollution and safety issues and what these could be.

Mr Gilligan confirmed that this is the proposal for the construction and operation of a LPG storage, cylinder filling and truck loading facility, with a maximum storage of LPG of 180 tonnes. Details regarding the proposal can be found at the following link on the Department of Planning website. It was noted that as this is not a scheduled activity, and is therefore a Council matter.

http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=8448 and <http://www.theherald.com.au/story/4950105/gas-in-the-pipeline-for-kooragang/>

Mr Craig requested a copy of the presentation on the Dust Deposition Project, to address some community continuing community concerns regarding black dust depositing in and around Stockton homes. Mr Craig noted that the presentation had been sent via email.

Mr Craig raised the concern of high noise events occurring in December which seemed to originate from Kooragang Island, and requested more information.

Mr Gilligan relayed that going through the EPA records, there was no environment line complaints received, except for a noise complaint that was received in June 2017, however the source was not able to be identified.

Mr Craig raised concern regarding Naphthalene odours in the early morning in Stockton during light winds coming from Koppers, and requested more information about what is happening to have such a release.

Mr Gilligan explained that the EPA has negotiated a number of PRP's with Koppers in recent years, including nitrogen blanketing around the plant, to reduce the potential odour emissions from the premises. Mr Gilligan suggested taking the conversation offline to further discuss with the EPA officer to investigate.

Mr Craig raised concern about beach erosion being a major environmental concern for Stockton residents, however noted that this was not the forum to discuss that issue.

Mr Craig raised concern about the PFAS contamination issue in Williamtown, and the Four Corners report has raised a lot of issues.

Mr Gilligan noted that this highlights how ubiquitous it is across the country. There are many sites within the North Branch, including Mines Rescue Services sites, Power Stations, Fire and Rescue Services. He noted that no other site was predicted to be as significant as Williamtown, due to the scale at which the fire fighting foam was used, in combination with environmental conditions of the area.

Mr Gilligan confirmed that PFAS is still leaving the RAAF Base in the groundwater, however the Department of Defence have two water treatment plants on site treating surface water, as well as other research projects. Mr Gilligan noted that the upcoming Human Health Risk Assessment will be reviewed by the EPA and the Expert Panel over the next few weeks, and this will determine if any changes are required to the Investigation Area and precautionary advice provided by the EPA.

The Chair raised a question regarding Tomago, and why this was not a problem.

Mr Gilligan showed a map of the area to the Committee, explaining the location with respect to the RAAF Base, and that groundwater and PFAS was unable to travel uphill and that the experts are confident in their hydrogeological modelling. Adding to the confusion is that community members are getting blood tests done that are showing elevated levels, however it is difficult to determine where that has come from, as there are many potential sources.

Dr Dalton also added that generally it is challenging to have conversations in the area, as community members are outraged and there is a high level of distrust. It also takes a while for the chemicals to be dispelled from the body as they have a long half life.

Mr Gilligan added that people who are following the precautionary advice could still have elevated levels due to prior exposure, or from a different source. Mr Gilligan also highlighted that Ms Morton is the Community Engagement Officer for the Williamstown PFAS contamination, and can provide updates and assistance should any questions come through the committee.

Dr Dalton acknowledged the cancer cluster concerns that had been raised in the media, and noted that the cancers reported were a broad range of cancers. He also noted that the Commonwealth were undertaking a statistical analysis on the suggested cancer cluster to further investigate.

6 Update on EPA Waste Regulation

Mr James provided the following update on the waste operations that are undertaken by the EPA.

The EPA regulates the waste industry, which includes landfills, transfer stations, skip bins, waste transport and classifications. Within the Hunter Region, the EPA regulates about 75 licenced premises, and many more unlicenced premises.

The Four Corners episode on the waste industry is not an accurate reflection of the EPA's compliance action, particularly allegations of a lack of action by the EPA or delayed action by the EPA.

The NSW EPA is aware of the issues raised, and it was highlighted that in general, investigations can be extremely complex. The EPA is often dealing with false documentation, transient workers, changing of business names, the definition of waste can be challenging, and it can take years to obtain sufficient evidence that can be defended in court.

The NSW EPA has been working with the recycling industry and the community to find alternatives for the storage of glass and markets/uses for the material and competition

with quarried products. It can be challenging as the EPA is provided with differing advice. Businesses and grant applications will outline there is a market for the glass, and later this found to not be the case. This may be partly due to issues beyond their control such as tariffs or prohibitions on some recycled products being sent overseas. Council also has a role in undertaking due diligence when undertaking contractual agreements.

Mangrove Mountain and waste going to Queensland were two other issues that were identified. Mr Gilligan noted that Mangrove Mountain is challenging, in that the community thought it would be a Golf Course, not a Landfill. The EPA commissioned an independent review of the site's plans and gave the local residents access and input into the review. Mr James indicated that the EPA has an operations officer dedicated to the site.

The EPA introduced the proximity principle in the *Protection of the Environment Operations (Waste) Regulation 2014*, that was designed to promote disposal of waste locally, however it was opposed in the Federal Court. The EPA accepted that it is not able to enforce the law on the basis that it is unconstitutional because of the argument that waste is a product. This was contrary to the original advice that was provided to the EPA. It is still an issue, however one way to resolve it is to apply a levy in all states. The EPA is considering other means to reduce the amount of waste being transported to Queensland.

In good news, the Waste Compliance team in Newcastle is a strong regulator. Since mid last year the team has issued nearly \$450,000 in fines and likely to issue another \$100,000 by the end of the year. There are approximately 5 prosecutions currently underway. These fines and prosecutions are against Councils, businesses and individuals. The Waste Compliance team is very involved and connected with the community through campaigns and letters.

7 **Presentation: Analysis of Ammonia and Nitrate in PM_{2.5} particles at Stockton**

Mr Hynes provided a presentation, with the following main conclusions:

- The bivariate plots show that the likely source of ammonium and nitrate (and by implication ammonium nitrate) is the Orica ammonium nitrate prill tower on Kooragang Island.
- High ammonium and nitrate concentrations at Stockton AQMS occur when the winds are from the north-west (2014-16).
- The high ammonium and nitrate concentrations arise from the same direction.
- Inter-annual meteorological variations have only a minor impact on species concentrations.
- The annual species concentrations show no significant upward or downward trend over the 2014-16 period.
- This suggests that the average emission strength of PM_{2.5} ammonium nitrate from the prill tower during May-August 2014-16 has also not changed significantly.
- The ammonia concentrations have decreased year-on-year from 2014 to 2016.
- Secondary sources of ammonium and nitrate may be less important in 2015/16.
- The median ratio of NH₄/NO₃ concentrations was 0.30 and 0.29 in 2015 and 2016, respectively This suggests the source is primary emissions of ammonium nitrate.

- The ratio in 2014 was 0.36, indicating an additional source of ammonium. A plausible explanation is that more secondary ammonium sulphate was present in winter 2014 compared with winter 2015/16. The ammonium sulphate may have been produced by the reaction of ammonia with sulphate species.

Mr Bridgman commented that the study was completed too soon, and should continue. He proposed that they should undertake a more detailed analysis of the daily data rather than monthly.

Ms Woodroffe indicated that Orica would like to continue monitoring. She also acknowledged that the data can be highly variable, and it is the intention to continue with the support of OEH.

Ms Woodroffe also touched on the PRP and that they were looking at a range of technical options, and this would be provided to the EPA at the end of this year 2017.

Mr Gilligan confirmed that the EPA would review the PRP with the air technical team, and decide what reasonable actions should be taken.

Action Item 2: The EPA will circulate the presentation to committee members.

8

Air Quality in Newcastle: Winter 2017

Mr Thompson presented with the following conclusions:

- Met: Newcastle region experienced average to below average rainfall overall, with a wet June and very dry July and August. Daytime temperatures were very much above average while temperatures overnight were above average.
- NO₂ & SO₂: No days over the benchmark
- PM_{2.5} & PM₁₀: No days over the benchmark
- NH₃: No days over the assessment criterion
- Rolling averages showed levels similar to earlier years, with some variability at some sites.
- Seasonal comparisons showed:
 - PM₁₀**
 - No days above benchmark in 2017
 - 3 days above benchmark in winter 2015
 - PM_{2.5}**
 - No days over the benchmark in 2017
 - 3 days above benchmark in winter 2013
 - 5 days above benchmark in winter 2015
- Daily PM₁₀ levels in 2017 generally within range of earlier years, although some higher levels seen on some days. Variability may be due to low number of years of historic data available for comparison.
- Daily PM_{2.5} levels in 2017 were variable compared to the same days in earlier years. Again, variability may be due to low number of years of historic data available for comparison.

<p>9</p>	<p>Budget Report 2016/17 – Newcastle Local Air Quality Monitoring Network</p> <p>Mr Gilligan provided an update on the budget. Overall there was a cost saving with OEHL, which is great to see that the NSW Government can deliver value for money.</p> <p>The committee noted the update on budget information.</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>Local Environment Issues update</p> <p>Mr Gilligan provided the printed summary of calls received in the months of August and September. A total of 19 were received for the LGA in August, and 25 in September.</p> <p>Action Item 3: The EPA agreed to circulate the summary of number of calls to the committee members.</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>NCCCE – Two Years in Review 2016-2017</p> <p>Mr Gilligan highlighted that this was the last meeting of the NCCCE for the current term. The EPA will be seeking expressions of interest in the coming weeks, which will include an advertisement in the paper, as well as details on the EPA website.</p> <p>Mr Gilligan also thanked the committee members for their efforts during this period, and highlight some of the achievements of the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building communications and engagement with the community, industry and Government. There is a much greater understanding between parties and the wider community; • The Dust Deposition studies is a great example, with a turnout of 400 people at City Hall, and it was great to have Keith involved in the steering group. This led to more acceptance of the methodology and next steps.
<p>12</p>	<p>General Business</p> <p>It was asked to Mr Gilligan whether noise monitoring would occur during the Supercar race.</p> <p>Mr Gilligan confirmed that the EPA will not be undertaking monitoring as we do not have a regulatory role in the event. However, Supercars have engaged a consultant to undertake monitoring to inform and refine their earlier modelling.</p>
<p>Closing Remarks</p> <p>The Chair thanked all members for their efforts and ongoing work in the Committee, and that all members contributions have been very much appreciated.</p>	
<p>Meeting closed: 8.00pm</p>	

ACTION ITEM LOG		
NCCCE MEETING NO. 46, 17 May 2017	DUE	RESP
Action 7. The Committee would like an update on the EPA funding for contaminated land management. The EPA will provide this information as it becomes available.	Ongoing	EPA
NCCCE MEETING NO. 47, 19 July 2017	DUE	RESP
Recommendation 2. The Committee recommended the EPA prepares a communications strategy for the Committee's consideration, detailing key messages on air quality, audience groups and costs and benefits of communication channels.	Ongoing	EPA
NCCCE MEETING NO. 48, 18 October 2017	DUE	RESP
Action item 1. The EPA will draft a letter on behalf of the Committee to thank Leanne Graham. The EPA will send to the Chair for approval and signature.	COMPLETE	EPA
Action item 2. The EPA will circulate the presentation on Analysis of Ammonia and Nitrate in PM _{2.5} particles in Stockton	COMPLETE	EPA
Action item 3. The EPA will circulate the summary of number of calls to Environment Line	COMPLETE	EPA