



Minutes

Meeting:	Newcastle Community Consultative Committee on the Environment - Out of Session Strategy Meeting	Date:	Monday 8 March 2021
Location:	Virtual – Microsoft Teams Click here to join the meeting	Time:	5.00pm – 6.00pm
Present:	John Tate – Chairperson Rick Banyard – Community representative Steven Crick – Environmental representative Trudie Larnach – Industry representative Nathan Robinson – Industry representative Adam Gilligan – EPA Megan Whelan - EPA Cathy Ajaka – EPA		
Apologies:	Keith Craig – Community representative Christopher Tola – Community representative Leah Cook – Industry representative		

Agenda items:

1. Introduction

1.1. Acknowledgment of Country and COVID-19 Procedures

The Chair acknowledged the Awabakal and Worimi people as the traditional owners of the land and paid respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

1.2. Present, apologies and declarations of interest

The Chair welcomed the committee and noted the apologies.

2. Strategic Plan 2020-2022

2.1. Overview of Survey Results

Mr Gilligan gave a high-level overview of the survey results, sharing the various comments provided by the committee members that undertook the survey. Although only 7 members completed the survey, it still provided clear issues to consider for the coming year. Mr Gilligan then handed over to Ms Whelan to provide some context regarding the hot topics.

Ms Whelan shared the high-level analysis regarding complaints that have come through to the EPA's Environment Line for the Newcastle LGA. Total complaints to the EPA have increased over the last 3 years, but for Newcastle LGA, complaints have decreased. Ms Whelan discussed the breakdown of complaint types. Ms Whelan also touched on the local news headlines for the Newcastle LGA which may assist in identifying issues for communicating to the wider community.

Mr Gilligan asked the committee if they wished to share any observations from the presentation.

Mr Banyard advised that the number of complaints may have decreased given the additional committees that have been established over the years – [Koppers Community Reference Group](#) and [Port Waratah Community Committee](#).

Mr Banyard also flagged what issues are fact versus fiction, for example the community's perception regarding Coal Dust. NCCCE was involved in several studies, he doesn't see formal evidence when visiting sites, however the community believes that it is still there. How do we convince the community that the evidence is there? How do we educate the community? Difference between coal terminal and yards?

Mr Tate raised the coal dust survey previously undertaken and is there any way we can build on that study without redoing it? Do we sweep the top of mailboxes, rebuild on what we've done and examine the results?

Mr Banyard flagged an area of concern could be to the west of the Carrington terminal, industrial drive along to coal pickup points and onto the holding yard where the grain terminals are. If there is a specific parcel of land, then best to call the Environment Line. Mr Banyard advised this was just an example and not a problem area.

Ms Larnach advised that if there are concerns with the Port terminal with its undertakings, then they can log it with the terminal directly.

2.2. Communication and engagement (including accessibility of air quality newsletters)

Mr Gilligan raised the option of an electronic version of a newsletter. The quarterly EPA Connect newsletters would work arranging with the EPA comms and engagement team to create a bespoke version for the NCCCE. We could add in target stories that lift the document for this audience and then get it out to as many local networks to pass on to their members. We could consider for some of those targeted stories topics like the dust deposition study and particle characterisation study to put back in front of community members – therefore, not reinventing the wheel.

Mr Tate was supportive of the idea, indicating it's a positive way forward and this way we can capture new members of the community. If members are not familiar with the history, then we can assist with the education.

Mr Tate flagged the additional community committees that Mr Banyard raised earlier in the meeting - that we as a committee engaged the establishment of these communities and therefore these are good news stories.

Mr Crick raised a question in the online chat forum – "How about a social media campaign? Doesn't have to be facebook, social pinpoint works well for localising things." Mr Gilligan responded advising you can look at Third Party suppliers too. Mr Gilligan indicated we are revisiting our approach for these types of campaigns. We are just a little way of the resourcing commitment at the moment and currently use "The Hive" as our platform.

2.3. Ammonium nitrate manufacture, storage and transport in Newcastle LGA

Mr Gilligan opened it up to the committee for discussion. He is keen to understand what people want to explore more in this space. Is it awareness, tightening of controls etc.?

Mr Robinson wants to know what aspects are we looking at – safety versus environment? Indicated that Orica are safety driven versus environmental. Mr Gilligan indicated this is a good point to raise and the EPA focus on environmental controls as an organisation.

It was also raised that we do need to flag the area of transporting of dangerous goods. It was suggested should we do more presentations to raise the awareness of the topic.

Mr Crick flagged that he has concerns around the safety of these issues due to the location of his house and the storage units close to residents.

Mr Gilligan indicated that at the most recent Newcastle City Council (NCC) meeting that Orica and Crawfords Freightlines and Safe Work NSW presented and provided a good overview of the issue and is happy to organise for a similar presentation to this committee. Mr Robinson indicated those presentations have also occurred at the Community Reference Group.

Mr Tate indicated that we need a benchmark to start from. He is keen to understand how Orica manage the storage of Ammonium Nitrate and the operational procedures in place.

It was suggested that we organise for the presentations that were presented at the recent NCC meeting to be presented to this committee over the coming months. It was also suggested to hold these in an out of session meeting to ensure the quarterly committee meeting is kept for standard business issues. We as a committee need to have a better understanding of how things are managed/assessed etc. We need to focus on what we can do in a positive way as a committee.

Mr Robinson is happy to take away the action and check with who would be best placed to present to the NCCCE. He is also more than happy to look at other presentations for example - Safe Work.

Mr Banyard advised that Orica have done an excellent job over the years on the actions that the organisation has undertaken.

Mr Banyard also flagged the management of transport for Ammonium Nitrate from Port Botany to the Newcastle LGA.

Action Item No	Action	Person Responsible
1	Organise for the presentations that were presented at the recent NCC meeting to be presented to the NCCCE over the coming months in an out of session meeting	Megan Whelan / Adam Gilligan

2.4. Coal dust management on Kooragang Island

Mr Gilligan provided a quick overview of the topic and wanted to know what the committee sees as the high-level issues.

Mr Tate reflagged the issue of re-educating the community on previous studies undertaken to -date. He also raised ongoing checks that occur at terminals regarding rail loading/unloading process.

Ms Larnach indicated that as an industry they are voluntarily undertaking these checks.

2.5. Next steps for NCCCE Strategic Plan

The EPA will take away these comments and document a plan against these 3 issues and plan agendas for upcoming committee meetings. Urban run-off and water pollution were raised, and we might be able to capture these topics too.

Mr Tate flagged noise and vibration was raised, was it site specific? Ms Whelan flagged the information received was across the whole of Newcastle LGA and not site specific or event specific. There is opportunity to investigate finer details. As a committee if this is something that we want to investigate further we could certainly look into the data in more detail to see if this is an emerging issue.

Stolthaven Fuel terminal was raised, keen to understand how it operates. It was suggested a presentation on this could also occur at future meetings/sessions.

Mr Banyard flagged the various briefings to be conducted in out of session meetings versus the formal quarterly meeting. The EPA will take that on board for future scheduling. Mr Gilligan also flagged potential site visits.

Action Item No	Action	Person Responsible
2	EPA to explore in more detail the Complaint data presented.	Megan Whelan