



## Minutes

<b>Meeting:</b>	Newcastle Community Consultative Committee on the Environment (No 57)	<b>Date:</b>	Monday 2 November 2020
<b>Location:</b>	EPA Office, 117 Bull Street, Newcastle West 230	<b>Time:</b>	5.30pm-7.30pm
<b>Last Meeting Date:</b>	15 October 2019	<b>Next Meeting Date:</b>	Monday 8 February 2021
<b>Present:</b>	John Tate – Chairperson Keith Craig – community representative Rick Banyard – community representative Trudie Larnach – industry representative Nathan Robinson – industry representative Leah Cook – industry representative Kristy Anderson – council representative ( <i>online</i> ) Adam Gilligan – EPA Gina Bradley – EPA Nikki Russell – EPA		
<b>Apologies:</b>	Steven Crick – environmental representative Christopher Tola – community 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.

Ms Bradley ran through COVID-19 procedures and housekeeping.

##### 1.2. Present, apologies and declarations of interest

The Chair welcomed the committee and noted the apologies. The following non-pecuniary declaration of interest was noted:

- The Chair holds a position on Orica’s Community Investment Program

The Chair highlighted that the onus is on committee members to declare any pecuniary interests at the beginning of each meeting.

##### 1.3. Committee introductions

Each member introduced themselves to the group. Ms Anderson has taken over from Mark Manning as a Council representative. Mr Robinson has taken over from Sherree Woodroffe as an Orica representative. Ms Cook represents Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) as a new industry representative. Mr Crick is a new environmental representative (not present at this meeting) and all other members were on the committee in the previous tenure period. Previous community representatives have brought valuable ideas to the committee and previous industry representatives have been fair and open. The Chair highlighted his role to achieve a cooperative approach amongst the group.

Ms Bradley thanked members for providing the 50-100 word introductions and photos that will be used to update the member profile section on the EPA website.

Mr Robinson shared hard copies of Orica's community newsletter with a Q&A section on ammonium nitrate.

## 2. Previous Minutes and Outstanding Actions

### 2.1. Review previous minutes

The previous minutes were adopted with minor changes from Sheree Woodroffe and Loredana Warren.

### 2.2. Outstanding actions

Action Item No	Action	Person Responsible	Status
1	EPA to organise a presentation from HCCDC in relation to long term remediation on Kooragang Island	Adam Gilligan	Ongoing – the committee agreed it would be value to revisit this in 2021

## 3. Strategic Plan 2020-2022

### 3.1. EPA's role and updated Terms of Reference

Mr Gilligan outlined the EPA's role with the committee and the importance of seeking consensus. The updated Terms of Reference set out the extended scope of the committee and include a new Code of Conduct. All committee members are also expected to follow the NCCCE Procedures. The procedures state that whilst members are free to express their personal views to the media, only the Chair is authorised to speak to the media on behalf of the committee. The EPA will update the media on the reestablishment of the committee following the first meeting. The EPA also provides secretariat support for the committee. Any requests for technical expertise or agenda items should be submitted in the template set out in the NCCCE Procedures.

Mr Gilligan provided a brief history of the committee's establishment following the Orica incident in 2011 and its original scope to inform government on the Air Quality Monitoring Network. The committee continues to provide a conduit between community, industry and environment representatives as well as being a conduit for broader information. Committee members have an opportunity to provide feedback to the EPA through an atmosphere of cooperation.

Mr Banyard called for a review of the existing monitoring station locations on the basis that the ecology and economy in the area has changed over the years. Ms Larnach reminded the committee that a 5-year review is already in place and that Loredana Warren presented on this at a previous meeting. The Chair asked if the EPA could share any information on the outcome of the last 5-year review.

### 3.2. Looking back: a review of the last year and summary of committee achievements

The Chair opened a discussion that highlighted the following committee successes and achievements:

- The Lower Hunter Particle Characterisation Study and subsequent workshops
- The Air Quality Monitoring Network Seasonal Newsletters
- The criterion used for determining locations of monitoring stations
- Information available on the website and mobile apps – the DPIE website is currently being upgraded with EPA and community members providing feedback to improve usability
- Increased level of knowledge in the community around current air quality
- Distribution of information through broader networks e.g. the PWCS community newsletter – Ms Larnach will provide a copy of a survey that looked at how their stakeholders access information

Mr Gilligan added that the monitoring networks have been improved over the past six months following the 2019/20 bushfires. There is still a need to achieve state-wide consistency, but it is great to see more work being initiated in this space. Additional monitoring stations have been implemented at Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour which will help provide a clearer picture across the regions. The Minister has also made a commitment to add a monitoring station at Morisset. There will not be a representative

from Lake Macquarie on the NCCCE as the brief from the Minister remains for a Newcastle based committee.

### 3.3. Looking forward: goal setting for the future term

Mr Robinson asked whether a communication strategy should be further explored. Mr Gilligan agreed that this should be a key focus. It is important for the committee to understand what the concerns are. It should not be presumed that air quality is always front of mind for the community. There should be a clear understanding about what the message is, who the audience is and what the best channel is for that message. Industry representatives will bring interesting perspectives based on what communication methods are currently working for them and what they are hearing from their stakeholders. The Chair added that the communication strategy should also consider how the committee receives information as well as how it distributes information. The Chair suggested hosting an NCCCE meeting in an alternative location for the community to observe or hosting a public event, COVID-19 restrictions permitting, to increase broader engagement.

Ms Bradley collated a list of issues raised by the committee prior to the meeting to consider for future agenda items. It was agreed that reviewing the Air Quality Monitoring Network Seasonal Newsletters will continue to be a key role for the committee. The committee should also have an opportunity to discuss environmental issues that may arise and share information from their networks at each meeting. Mr Gilligan suggested holding a further strategic planning session at the next meeting or out of session, to determine priority areas for the committee to focus on. The Chair agreed this would be a good idea. The following issues were put forward as some initial suggestions:

- Water quality study on the Hunter Estuary – Mr Craig asked if the EPA could provide an update on this issue following discussion at previous meetings
- Greenhouse gases – Mr Craig asked if Mr Robinson could present on emissions from Orica. Mr Robinson advised that:
  - Orica continues to explore opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. No significant projects have currently progressed to form the subject of a presentation, but Mr Robinson will advise the committee if a project does go ahead.
  - Orica does have a current project focussed on reducing NOx emissions (not N2O which is the greenhouse gas) from the reformer in the ammonia plant by an anticipated 30%. This equates to approximately 10% of total site emissions.
- Transport pollutants – Mr Banyard highlighted that pollutants from the nearby airport and RAAF Base are an issue that have not been tackled by this committee or by the new International Maritime Organisation (IMO) regulations and it would be useful to have information on the quantity of diesel used in China and around the world

Mr Gilligan emphasised that whilst there is benefit gaining knowledge in some of these broader spaces and it is good for the committee to consider, it is recommended that the focus be on areas that the committee have a higher capacity to influence. Pragmatic awareness should be given to the context of each issue. The Chair added that the list of topic areas should not solely be generated by members and that it should also be open for the EPA to make suggestions for priority areas to allow for greater cooperation.

Action Item No	Action	Person Responsible
2	Publish a media release detailing the reestablishment of the committee	Gina Bradley
3	Circulate the outcomes of the last 5-year NLAQMN review	Gina Bradley
4	Circulate the results of the PWCS stakeholder survey	Trudie Larnach
5	Circulate EPA Stakeholder Survey results once available	Gina Bradley
6	Collate a formal list of topics/issues and organise an out of session strategy meeting to consider priority areas for the next term	Gina Bradley

7	Provide an update on the Hunter Estuary water quality study	Adam Gilligan
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#### 4. Network feedback – standing item

##### 4.1. Information sharing and feedback from broader networks

Mr Craig shared updates from the Stockton Community Action Group (SCAG). The group is currently focused on storage of ammonium nitrate, coastal erosion, coal dust from strong westerlies and dust from Simsmetal scrapyards. There has also been discussion around how the community want to receive information. Mr Craig has updated the group on the reestablishment of the NCCCE and he will report back with further updates at the next committee meeting.

Mr Robinson confirmed that the installation of new pollution controls at Orica’s Prill Tower are scheduled for completion by 2023 in accordance with EPA licence conditions. Five interim milestones will see the project through to completion and significantly reduce PM2.5 emissions. Orica is required to submit progress reports to EPA as they work through the project and Mr Robinson will present on progress to the committee.

Mr Banyard shared updates from the Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group (NCIG) which has been making positive progress to address dust problems by veneering coal stacks as a dust suppression technique. A modification has been approved to increase the capacity of their facility. Mr Banyard also raised the new train regulations and expressed his concerns with the limited impact this has had. He suspects the trains that are not overloaded may be a result of pressure from the EPA. He is interested to see the impact on the port from grain trains in the upcoming harvest. Ms Cook offered to present on the new regulations to help with understanding in this space.

Action Item No	Action	Person Responsible
8	ARTC to present on the new train regulations	Leah Cook

#### 5. EPA Update – standing item

##### 5.1. Regulatory Operations Metropolitan North

Mr Gilligan provided an update on the EPA’s new Operating Model and changes to the distribution of work across the new Metro and Regional North divisions. These changes have seen additional core operations such as waste, contaminated sites and rail regulation being transferred into Regulatory Operations Metro North.

There is ongoing interest from the community in reducing ammonium nitrate emissions at Orica. The Particle Characterisation Study found that 40% of emissions contributed to fine particle air pollution in Stockton, with a significant amount of these coming from the Prill Tower. Mr Gilligan gave credit to Orica, the EPA and the NCCCE for driving the improvements to Orica’s Prill Tower.

Mr Gilligan gave a summary of incidents at Koppers over the past two years including a recent penalty hearing following a tar pitch spill in October 2018 and two matters from May 2019 relating to gaseous releases and issues with valves and operation of the plant. Penalty notices have also been issued for other minor incidents. In April 2019, an incident occurred which resulted in the hospitalisation of a dozen people from strong naphthalene odours. The EPA was unable to conclusively establish where the odours arose from. Regardless of the penalty, the scrutiny on Koppers has seen them improve systems and procedures such as training. Conversations with NCCCE members and other active community members have encouraged them to improve their engagement and they would benefit from working further with industry on this. Despite some occasional fume complaints, there has been overall improvement and the matter will hopefully draw to a close in the near future.

Mr Banyard recognised that Koppers have taken on board what they have to do and have established a community group which has held a couple of meetings so far. It is great to see the NCCCE setting an example and influencing this. The Chair highlighted the benefits of opening dialogue with complainants as a solution to these problems.

## 6. Air Quality Monitoring Network Seasonal Newsletter – standing item

### 6.1. Overview of Air Quality Monitoring Network Newsletters

The committee were provided with a copy of the recently published Summer 2019/2020 Newsletter. The next newsletter(s) will be made available for the committee to review before the next meeting. It was acknowledged that the newsletters have been through a number of different formats over the years and that it would be good to promote their existence and find better ways to share this information with the community and broader networks. It would also be good to improve the current air quality alerts.

Mr Gilligan highlighted the benefit of the newsletters as a useful tool to identify long term sources and help set the broader context. Mr Banyard added that the importance of newsletters will increase as learning increases, which is already happening with the current website upgrades and launch of mobile apps. The newsletters will become a future catalogue that is important to be maintained. For this reason, it is also important to revisit earlier studies such as the Particle Characterisation Study to ensure it continues to be accessible.

Mr Robinson commented on a key challenge with information on air quality is balancing simplicity with complexity. Mr Craig suggested preparing a factsheet that would explain how to navigate the website, what the data means and how to use it. My Banyard has been involved with the review of the website and added that some of the proposed changes will address this. Changing the 24-hour average to a 1-hour average has already been a big help. Mr Robinson would still like to see the information being made more accessible, for example by using a short video explanation instead of a long, complex newsletter.

### 6.2. Autumn 2020 Newsletter

This item is postponed to the next meeting for Loredana Warren to present.

## 7. General Business

### 7.1. Other

Nil.

### 7.2. Next meeting date

The next meeting date is confirmed as Monday 8 February 2021 and will take place at the usual location at the Newcastle EPA office, COVID-19 restrictions permitting.

Mr Banyard questioned whether the committee should be meeting more frequently to increase productivity. He suggested a voluntary discussion as an option if budget limits pose an issue. Mr Gilligan agreed to consider options for discussion at the next meeting so that the meeting frequency can be set to suit the list of priorities.

Action Item No	Action	Person Responsible
9	Review meeting frequency and options for delivery	Gina Bradley