



Environment Protection Authority – Newcastle Community Consultative Committee on the Environment Minutes

Today's Meeting Date:	15 October 2019 (No 56)	Next meeting date:	NA
Meeting location:	EPA Newcastle	Last Meeting Date:	9 July 2019 (No 55)
Meeting opened at:	1730	Meeting closed at:	1930
EPA Convenor:	Karen Marler – EPA	Minute Secretary:	Bianca Morton - EPA
Present:	John Tate - Chair Dr Craig Dalton - Department of Health Thomas Levick - Environment Representative Mark Manning - Newcastle City Council Chris Tola – Community Representative Keith Craig - Community Representative Loredana Warren – Department of Planning, Industry and Environment Rick Banyard - Minister's Community Representative Sheree Woodroffe – Industry Representative Carolyn Walsh – Acting Chair, EPA Karen Marler – EPA Adam Gilligan - EPA Bianca Morton – EPA Matt Corradin - EPA		
Apologies:	Trudy Larnach – Industry Representative		

1 Review Minutes from last meeting Tuesday 9 July 2019 (No 55)				
No	Agenda Item	Action	Person Responsible	Completion Date
1.1	Adoption of previous minutes	One edit – addition of Sheree Woodroffe to attendee list. Minutes adopted.	Chair	15 October 2019
1.2	Action 1: EPA to provide more details on the release of the CDS report, and link to the CDS website.	Email sent to Committee.	Bianca Morton	16.07.19
1.3	Action 2: Circulate presentation to the Committee	Email sent to Committee.	Bianca Morton	10.07.19
1.4	Action 3: Circulate presentation to the Committee.	Email sent to Committee.	Bianca Morton	10.07.19
1.5	Action 4: EPA to circulate the Particle Characterisation Study	Email sent to Committee.	Bianca Morton	16.07.19
1.6	Action 5: EPA to organise a presentation from HCCDC.	HCCDC were not available for the next meeting. Will try and organise for a meeting next year.	Bianca Morton	TBD
1.7	Action 6: Thomas Levick to present on water quality at next meeting.	Thomas Levick will be providing information at the next meeting.	Thomas Levick	15.10.19

No	Agenda Item	Notes	Action/Decision	Status
2.1	DPIE presentation on the Air Quality Report	<p>Loredana Warren, presented on Newcastle Air Quality Monitoring Network Winter 2019.</p> <p>The summary of June and August includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newcastle had average to above average rainfall overall, with above average in June and August, and below average in July. • No days over benchmarks or assessment criteria for NO₂, SO₂ and NH₃ • One day over the benchmark for PM_{2.5} at Stockton (1 June), potentially due to local industrial sources. • 5 days above benchmark for PM₁₀. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mayfield, Newcastle and Wallsend had no days; Beresfield and Carrington had one day; Stockton had five days ○ This was fewer days compared to Winter 2018 (8 days) but more than other years (0 to 3) ○ Most extensive event on 9 August was an exceptional event due to long-range dust and potential smoke impacts. This occurred during the passage of a strong cold front, with elevated levels under moderate to strong NW winds. <p>See report for details.</p> <p>Mr Gilligan noted the drought conditions impacts, including that the Northern tablelands currently have 26% exposed soil, which is 3% on average at this time of year.</p> <p>Ms Warren confirmed that that figure also includes other dry years, so it really highlights the tough drought conditions we are experiencing now.</p> <p>Mr Banyard advised that he was to write more articles about air quality for the Portside Local, as many readers were complaining about air quality issues. He now has added a section on air quality to each Newsletter and the community is responding very well.</p> <p>Mr Banyard highlighted that there is a general lack of knowledge in the wider community, and providing this information has helped to reduce complaints and increase understanding.</p>		

		<p>Mr Craig mentioned that he would like to have a newsletter from this Committee, which he has raised a number of times.</p> <p>Mr Tate highlighted that the Committee needs to better educate the wider community. Mr Craig is a strong advocate for a newsletter. Something that can get the information out there, as it is an ongoing battle to get factual information in the community. He raised the question of resources and how the Committee could achieve this.</p> <p>Ms Warren highlighted the importance of face to face activities as they really help to increase understanding.</p> <p>She also mentioned that they are currently looking at doing some event analysis. They are working on one for particles to help explain what happens in events. One has been done for ozone as well, and they are looking to do seasonal summaries.</p> <p>Mr Banyard added that it is difficult to explain air quality all at once, as it is very complicated, so this is why in his articles he has split them into segments, which has really helped.</p> <p>Ms Warren said that the Bureau of Meteorology are now putting out media alerts when big dust events are coming, which helps.</p> <p>Mr Gilligan added that you can see a shift in perception, especially when people know prior to an event, there is a better understanding.</p>		
2.2	Hunter River Estuary Health Project	<p>Matt Corradin presented on the EPA's Hunter River Estuary Health Project.</p> <p>The presentation covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EPA's Hunter Region Strategic Operations Unit and what they do; • Outlined the outcomes of the Health of the Hunter Report Card developed by OEH (now EES) in 2017; • Highlighted other relevant bodies of work with the Estuary including Pollution Reduction Programs; and • Overview of the scope of the Hunter River Estuary Health Project. 	Action 1: circulate the link to the Lower Hunter River Health Monitoring Report Card.	Complete 16.10.19

		<p>The Strategic Operations Unit is tasked with a range of specific roles including projects beyond just individual premises and looking at environmental issues more holistically.</p> <p>The Health of the Hunter Report highlighted a range of inputs for consideration, such as industry, grazing, housing, prawning, dredging, agriculture and land clearing. The Report identified nutrients and metals as keys issues of concern.</p> <p>The EPA has previously focused efforts through Pollution Reduction Programs and routine regulatory activities on a number of premises around the lower estuary, particularly around Newcastle Harbour, such as Orica and Port of Newcastle. It was now time to look at the estuary and in fact the catchment to look at the best return for nutrient and metal reduction whilst also addressing a recent Hunter Water proposal about STP regulation.</p> <p>The team has undergone the detailed project planning phase, and now moving on to build on existing data, review the literature, identify key focus areas and sites regarding metals and nutrients, and engage widely with stakeholders.</p> <p>See presentation for more details.</p> <p>Mr Manning highlighted that recreation was not included on the report card. Mr Corradin noted this and advised that it would be included for consideration.</p> <p>Mr Craig asked about whether contaminants in sludge and sediments are being considered as part of the project. Mr Corradin explained that this is predominately from historical contamination sources. It will need to be determined how to best address these issues, whether leaving in situ is better than disturbing the sediments. Both scenarios can have different outcomes.</p> <p>Mr Craig also asked whether there will be any fish sampling to analyse their uptake. Mr Corradin responded that it is still in the early days of development, but that biota sampling will be considered as part of the project.</p> <p>Mr Gilligan added that Department of Primary Industries Fisheries don't routinely test fish, unless directed to do so in response to a specific environmental concern. An</p>		
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No	Agenda Item	Notes	Action/Decision	Status
2.3	Discussion: water quality in the Hunter River Estuary	<p>Thomas Levick asked the group about the release of the OEH report, and whether there was a need to revisit releasing the report again.</p> <p>Mr Gilligan added that the original plan was to promote the report in a similar way to the particle characterisation study, with a town hall style presentation and fact sheets. However the decision was made not to do a similar release for this report.</p> <p>He also suggested that as the report is already publicly available online, and has been for some time, there is limited value in doing a large public release now, however very happy to do it for any new or current data that is gathered through this project.</p> <p>He added that the EPA's default position is to engage on issues, especially when there are any health implications.</p> <p>Mr Corradin added that the project will have a stakeholder engagement plan and is open to all options of engagement.</p> <p>Mr Tate added that they have run community sessions in the past which have been very helpful, and good to get different perspectives.</p> <p>Mr Tola said that it would be good to use that information to assist in forecasting for climate change issues.</p>		

No	Agenda Item	Notes	Action/Decision	Status
2.4	EPA Update	<p>Karen Marler outlined that she was happy to back be in her substantive role, after 7 months of acting in another role within the EPA. She said that it was an excellent opportunity to work with others in the technical space on air, water and policy.</p> <p>She handed over to Carolyn Walsh, the Acting Chair of the EPA to say a few words.</p> <p>Ms Walsh thanked the group for hosting her and outlined that traditionally the EPA has had a combined role of Chair and CEO, but that that has now been split into two roles. She is acting in the Chair role, and Tracey Mackay is the newly appointed CEO.</p> <p>One of the role targets is to be a champion of community, so she is currently trying to get around as much as possible to meet with stakeholders and attend meetings such as these ones, to get to know the people, and what the EPA does. She has been to Broken Hill, Armidale, and she will be in the Upper Hunter in a few weeks.</p> <p>She sees this as a great opportunity to see how these meetings work, and she highlighted that she thinks it is a great model. She also highlighted that the needs of community around the state are so varied, which is why it is important to get out and meet people to understand the issues.</p> <p>Ms Marler circulated some information on environment line calls for July, August and September. She highlighted that odour complaints were the most common for all months, and that July had more calls than August and September.</p> <p>Mr Dalton asked whether the EPA gets many woodsmoke complaints. Ms Marler responded that the EPA doesn't really for this area. Mr Manning responded that neither do Council.</p> <p>Mr Craig asked for an update on the PM_{2.5} reduction project at Orica. Ms Woodroffe responded that their Pollution Reduction Program report is due to be submitted to the EPA in December 2019 and is on track.</p>		

2.5	General Business	<p>Mr Tate asked if there was any more business that the members would like to raise. Mr Banyard had three items to share with the group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPCSM have put in two formal complaints about coal trains. He discussed the changes to the regulations and that now ARTC have three licences; • 1 January 2020 is when the new regulations for cruise ships will be in effect. He encouraged the Committee to keep an eye out to see if that makes a difference. It was also clarified that AMSA are the responsible agency for this regulation; and • He also highlighted that the Committee is still waiting for an update on the work being undertaken by HCCDC on Kooragang Island. <p>Ms Marler added that this issue was covered early in the meeting that HCCDC were unable to attend but will be invited early next year to present to the Committee.</p> <p>Mr Tate initiated further discussion on communication and education.</p> <p>He suggested that the Committee consider engaging with high school students. Mr Craig also added that he supported the idea of having a regular newsletter. It was highlighted that a lot of work is going on, and a lot of people don't know what is happening.</p> <p>It was highlighted that the local newspapers cover national data, but do not do a good job covering local data that is relevant to the area.</p> <p>Mr Tate added that lifting the level of understanding of the community is beneficial.</p> <p>Mr Levick added that he supported the idea of engaging with high school students, and also supported the newsletter.</p> <p>Ms Marler added the EPA has previously tried to engage with schools in the past, however unless it is incorporated into the curriculum it is difficult to get them on board.</p> <p>Mr Gilligan added that it is really important to focus on what the key messages are, and then highlight who the messages are for, and then the best channel to get the messages to those people.</p>		
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