

**MEETING No. 26**  
**Newcastle Community Consultative Committee on the Environment**  
**(NCCCE)**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Date:** 9 April 2014 **Time:** 5:30 pm

**File:** EF13/8723

**Location:** EPA Conference Room, Ground Floor,  
117 Bull Street, Newcastle West

**In attendance:** John Tate (Chair), Keith Craig (Community), Adam Gilligan (Newcastle City Council), Nick Godfrey-Smith (Industry), Paul McBain (Minister's Nominee), Paul Thomas (Industry), Zoe Rogers (Environment), Gary Davey (EPA Director North), Mitchell Bennett (EPA Acting Manager Hunter Region), Leanne Graham (EPA Project Officer)

**Guest Speakers** David Frith (Director - Infrastructure and Environment NSW Minerals Council)  
Brad Deane (Manager - Policy, NSW Minerals Council)  
Ronan Kellagher, (Principal Consultant, Pacific Environment)  
John Planner (Director, Introspec Consulting)  
Peter Marczan (EPA Manager Noise Policy)  
Gordon Downey (EPA Senior Noise Officer)

**Meeting Record**

Agenda Item	Meeting Details
<b>Item 1</b>	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b> The Chair welcomed committee members and guest speakers
<b>Item 2</b>	<b>Apologies</b> None.
<b>Item 3</b>	<b>Minutes from Previous Meeting</b> Minutes of Meeting No.24 (12 February 2014) were adopted as a true and accurate record.  Paul McBain requested minor amendments to the draft minutes of Meeting No.25, adding to Item 3, "Varying distances between the monitor and trains on each track may affect the results".  Minutes of Meeting No.25 (12 March 2014), incorporating the requested amendments, were adopted as a true and accurate record.

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Item 4	<p><b>Actions Arising from Previous Meetings</b></p> <p><u>Meeting No.23 (13Nov13) Action 2:</u> Completed 09/04/14. EPA provided a timeline of EPA air quality projects approved for 2014-2015.</p> <p><u>Meeting No.24 (12Feb14) Action 1:</u> Completed 09/04/14. EPA circulated a proposed timeline of priorities for future meetings.</p> <p><u>Meeting No.24 (12Feb14) Action 2:</u> Completed 09/04/14. EPA reported to NCCCE that 'working day' is defined as Monday to Friday, for the EPA's <i>Requirements for publishing pollution monitoring data</i>.</p> <p><u>Meeting No.24 (12Feb14) Action 3:</u> Completed 13/02/14. EPA emailed to NCCCE members the slide presentation on changes to EPA requirements for publication of monitoring data by industries holding environment protection licences.</p> <p><u>Meeting No.24 (12Feb14) Action 3:</u> Update 09/04/14. The EPA has asked rail operators for information on their respective policies and environmental risk assessments regarding the use of sand in the rail corridor. This information has not been received to date by the EPA.</p>
Item 5	<p><b>NSW Minerals Council and Investigation of Dust Associated with Coal Trains</b></p> <p>NSW Minerals Council (NSWMC) has engaged environmental consultants, Pacific Environment and Introspec Consulting, to identify opportunities to improve dust management practices in the coal supply chain. Wind tunnel tests will assess the effectiveness of water spraying and chemical veneers to reduce wind erosion. Preliminary consultation with stakeholders, including the EPA, commenced in February 2014. A final report will be published on the NSWMC website in the second half of 2014.</p> <p>Mr Frith outlined the background to the research and acknowledged the NSWMC's awareness of community concerns regarding dust in the rail corridor.</p> <p>Mr Kellagher (Pacific Environment) provided an overview of the research. The study objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To identify opportunities to improve management of dust from coal wagons.</li> <li>• To develop a relative risk matrix for dust sources and management options.</li> <li>• To ensure ongoing consultation with industry, the community and government.</li> </ul> <p>A survey of the different users of the coal supply chain will include operators involved in preparing coal for transport, wagon loading and maintenance, wagon operation and coal unloading at ports and power stations.</p> <p>The survey of industry practices will gather information, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coal types, washed or crushed, moisture content, and tonnages.</li> <li>• Frequency and causes of wagon overfilling and spillage.</li> <li>• The types and effectiveness of existing dust mitigation measures.</li> <li>• The status of dust mitigation options, such as planned or trialled.</li> <li>• The compatibility of dust mitigation options with existing infrastructure.</li> </ul>

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	<p>Mr Planner (Introspec Consulting) explained wind tunnel laboratory tests, showing photographs of experiments at the University of Newcastle. The testing measures dust lift-off, incorporating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 30 coal types with different moisture contents and surface treatments, such as the application of water and various chemical dust suppressants.</li> <li>• Variable cross wind speeds, train travel speeds.</li> <li>• Exposure times to simulate rail trips from mine to wash plant, port or power station.</li> </ul> <p>Results from previous wind tunnel tests indicate major reductions in dust lift-off from water spraying on shorter trips and chemical veneering on longer trips.</p> <p>Results from the survey and the wind tunnel testing will inform the development of a relative risk matrix, to rank dust source types and mitigation options, and to guide implementation of improved dust management.</p> <p>In response to questions, the speakers added the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chemical veneers are biodegradable, approved by health authorities and managed in accordance with Materials Safety Data Sheets.</li> <li>- The survey includes scope for questioning the frequency of practices, such as 'garden bedding', to shape the surface profile of coal in the loaded wagon.</li> <li>- EPA and industry operators contributed to and support the study objectives and researchers hope for a high response rate.</li> <li>- Scope exists for further surveys.</li> </ul> <p>NCCCE members expressed enthusiasm for the study and look forward to the results.</p> <p>The Chair commended the study and emphasised the value of making the methods and the findings easily available to the public.</p>
Item 6	<p><b>NCCCE's Priority Action No.2 in 2014: EPA report to NCCCE on the regulatory framework for noise (existing facilities and proposed developments)</b></p> <p>Mr Downey explained the principles of noise measurement and impact assessment as an introduction to the EPA's Industrial Noise Policy (INP) and its forthcoming review.</p> <p>Relevant principles of noise measurement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noise is air pressure fluctuations detected by the human ear as sound.</li> <li>• Air pressure is measured in units called Pascals (1 Pa = 1 kilogram/metre/second<sup>2</sup>).</li> <li>• The ear detects sounds in the range of 0.00002 Pa - 200 Pa. The extreme magnitude of this auditory range is compressed to a logarithmic scale, to simplify measurement.</li> <li>• Decibel (dB) is the measurement unit in the log scale auditory range of 0 dB - 140 db.</li> </ul>

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	<p>The A-weighted decibel (dBA) is a further scaling of decibel units to emphasise the sound frequencies to which the human ear is most sensitive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rules of linear arithmetic do not apply to logarithmic values. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 40 dB + 40 dB ≠ 80 dB</li> <li>○ 40 dB + 40 dB = 43 dB</li> <li>○ 50 db + 40 dB = 50.4 dB</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ An increase of 1 - 2 dB generally is not perceptible</li> <li>○ An increase of 5 dB generally is noticeable</li> <li>○ An increase of 10 dBA generally is perceived as a doubling of loudness</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The INP sets out the regulatory framework for the assessment of noise impacts by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting assessment methods and criteria</li> <li>• Requiring consideration of mitigation methods</li> <li>• Providing a process to set noise limits within a social, economic and environmental context</li> </ul> <p>Steps in the INP process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish a project specific noise level (PSNL), by identifying the more stringent criterion- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Either the intrusive criterion, based on background noise plus 5 dBA</li> <li>ii. Or the amenity criterion, based on limiting the maximum noise levels to preserve the amenity of the surrounding environment. For example, the recommended maximum noise level for an urban/industrial evening environment is 60 dBA</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Predicting the noise level from the new activity</li> <li>3. Where the PSNL is exceeded, consider mitigation</li> <li>4. Predict noise level with mitigation</li> <li>5. Where noise still exceeds the PSNL, consider options to further manage residual impacts, such as limits on operating hours</li> <li>6. Consent conditions or licence requirements are then set.</li> </ol>

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	<p>The 2014 INP review process involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An interagency working group with representation from the Department of Planning and Environment, NSW Health and EPA.</li> <li>• Providing increased clarity and transparency to ensure requirements are understood easily and that the document is written in plain English.</li> <li>• Simplifying the assessment process while not reducing the ability of the guideline to drive best practice outcomes.</li> <li>• Providing better links to planning and regulatory frameworks to improve noise management through effective strategic planning.</li> <li>• Technical review compared with other jurisdiction to achieve best practice.</li> </ul> <p>The EPA currently is planning the consultation process for the INP review, aiming to finalise by December 2014.</p> <p>In response to questions, Mr Downey made the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The consultation process for the INP review will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Discussion paper circulated to stakeholders and publically available</li> <li>○ Workshops and seminars</li> <li>○ Addressing the issues raised during the consultation.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• A challenge for INP review process is to provide a better explanation of why the maximum amenity level is not a mandatory level.</li> <li>• The INP review aims to improve understanding of how the approval process works, and how consent conditions are determined.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair thanked the guest speakers for the presentation and noted that the NCCCE will follow the INP review process with interest.</p>
<p><b>Item 7</b></p>	<p><b>Update on EPA Lower Hunter Air Quality Projects</b></p> <p><b>7.1. Air Quality Monitoring Network</b></p> <p>Mr Bennett provided an update on the construction of the air quality monitoring stations (AQMS) and the regulation of the network.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carrington AQMS: - Development application approved by Newcastle City Council. NSW Public Works expects completion of construction by June 2014.</li> <li>• Mayfield West AQMS: - Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) sought approval from property owners. Power supply to site upgraded. Commission expected in June 2014.</li> <li>• Stockton AQMS: - Orica AQMS to become part of the OEH network.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EPA has contracted SKM air quality consultants to undertake an independent assessment of the cost effectiveness of establishing an industry-funded monitoring network, operated by OEH, as required by the <i>Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997</i>, before the development of a regulatory document.</li> </ul> <p>In discussion, Mr Bennett confirmed that the EPA would provide initial costs for construction and operation of the network which will be recouped from relevant industries.</p> <p><b>7.2. Lower Hunter and Lake Macquarie-Wyong Monthly Air Quality Reports</b></p> <p>Mr Bennett confirmed that the EPA has contracted Todoroski Air Sciences to continue providing monthly reports on air quality in the lower Hunter. Discussions continue regarding monthly reports on air quality for Lake Macquarie and Wyong.</p> <p><b>7.3. Lower Hunter Particle Characterisation Study</b></p> <p>Mr Craig tabled a progress report. Key points included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Project Management Team meets monthly, since November 2013 and includes representatives from EPA, OEH, NSW Health, CSIRO, ANSTO (Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation) and NCCCE.</li> <li>The study design incorporated peer reviews by two independent experts.</li> <li>The study webpage includes details on the study objectives, participating organisations, instrumentation selected, sampling sites, chemical analysis to be conducted and the final study report timeframe (<a href="http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/aqms/lowhunterparticle.htm">http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/aqms/lowhunterparticle.htm</a>).</li> <li>Sampling commenced in March 2014, four sites collect samples every third day: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beresfield and Newcastle OEH AQMS - PM<sub>2.5</sub> monitors.</li> <li>Mayfield West and Stockton new OEH AQMS - PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub> monitors.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Source apportionment will commence once the full year of sampling is complete.</li> <li>Progress Reports will be posted on the study webpage following the completion of sampling periods for Autumn, Winter, Spring and Summer.</li> <li>Final Study Report is due for publication early in 2016.</li> </ul> <p><b>7.4. Lower Hunter Dust Deposition Study</b></p> <p>Mr Davey confirmed that the study will respond to community concerns by investigating the nature of the black substance deposited on exterior domestic and architectural surfaces.</p> <p>The study Reference Group met for the first time on 2 April 2014. Membership is comprised of two community representatives, two independent technical experts, two industry representatives and two EPA representatives. The EPA provides a Chairperson and secretarial services.</p>

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	<p>The Reference Group will oversee the design of the study proposal, with reference to information provided by the complaints data in the EPA Environment Line database.</p> <p>EPA will call for tenders from independent contractor to undertake the study. Progress and results will be published on an EPA web page dedicated to the study.</p> <p>The next meeting will be held on 16 April 2014.</p> <p><b>7.5. Lower Hunter Community Research Project</b></p> <p>Mr Davey tabled a progress report, Key points included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The EPA engaged the successful tenderer, Access Macquarie Limited, in December 2013.</li> <li>• The objectives of the project include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Empowering local communities to engage in informed discussions on air quality.</li> <li>▪ Fostering working relationships between community and government.</li> <li>▪ Identify solutions and actions to address community concerns on air quality.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Status: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A project report in February 2014 included a survey to be used to interview a range of stakeholders to identify any gaps in community consultation on issues concerning air quality and to seek advice on the best means to consult with sectors of the Lower Hunter community.</li> <li>▪ Key stakeholders will be interviewed over the next two months.</li> <li>▪ The project is expected to be finalised in mid June 2014.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>7.6. Air App</b></p> <p>Mr Davey reported that EPA has explored several options for increasing community access to air quality information via mobile internet platforms.</p> <p>OEH employs a web service supply company, Kisters, to ensure that NSW air quality data is displayed on the OEH website. Currently, Kisters, is developing an air quality app for mobile devices. OEH and EPA are assessing its suitability.</p>
<p><b>Item 8</b></p>	<p><b>General Business</b></p> <p>No issues raised.</p>
<p><b>Item 9</b></p>	<p><b>Next Meetings</b></p> <p><b>Date:</b> Wednesday 14 May 2014.</p> <p><b>Location:</b> EPA Conference Room, Ground Floor, 117 Bull Street, Newcastle West</p> <p><b>Time:</b> 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm</p>
<p><b>Meeting ended at 7:50 pm</b></p>	