

MEETING No. 34
Newcastle Community Consultative Committee on the Environment
(NCCCE)

MEETING MINUTES

Date: 18 February 2015 **Time:** 5.30 pm

File: EF13/8723

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

In attendance: John Tate (Chair), Rick Banyard (Community),
 Andrew Baxter (City of Newcastle), Paul McBain (Minister’s Nominee),
 John Mackenzie (Environment - alternate), Paul Thomas (Industry),
 James Whelan (Community - alternate), Sherree Woodroffe (Industry)

 Gary Davey (EPA Director, North)
 Sylvia Bell (EPA Director, Stakeholder Engagement and Environment),
 Adam Gilligan (EPA Manager, Hunter Region),
 Matt Riley (NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH), Director, Climate
 and Atmospheric Science), Leanne Graham (EPA Project Officer).

Apologies Keith Craig (Community), Nick Godfrey-Smith (Industry)

Meeting Record

Agenda Item	Meeting Details
Item 1	Welcome Chair welcomed attendees and introduced Mr Baxter, new representative for the City of Newcastle.
Item 2	Apologies As above.
Item 3	Minutes from Previous Meeting (10 December 2014) Previous minutes adopted, incorporating amendments proposed by Dr Whelan.
Item 4	Actions Arising from Previous Meetings <u>Meeting No.33 (10Dec14) Recommendation 1:</u> 18/02/15, OEH responded to the recommendation by including in the <i>Newcastle Local Air Quality Monitoring Network Seasonal Report: Spring 2014:</i> (1) fire maps for days with bush fire activity near to the Lower Hunter region, based on information from the NSW RFS* and US NASA MODIS FIRES**; and (2) an explanation on how to read a pollution rose. *Rural Fire Services **US National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) Fire Information for Resource Management System (FIRES)

Agenda Item	Meeting Details
<p>Item 4 (Cont)</p>	<p><u>Meeting No.33 (10Dec14) Recommendation 2:</u> 02/02/15, EPA responded by publishing in early 2015 the report on the <i>Lower Hunter Air Quality Community Research Project</i> and the EPA's response to the report.</p> <p><u>Meeting No.33 (10Dec14) Recommendation 3:</u> 27/01/15, Mr Banyard recommended at the NCCCE Planning Session that the NCCCE considered requesting site tours to view areas of local environmental concern or interest.</p>
<p>Item 5</p>	<p>Air Quality Monitoring Network Seasonal Report: Spring 2014</p> <p>Mr Riley presented the first draft quarterly report, the <i>Newcastle Local Air Quality Monitoring Network Seasonal Report: Spring 2014</i> (the Report).</p> <p>The Report described the network performance and pollutant levels recorded for spring 2014 (1 September to 30 November), at air quality monitoring stations (AQMS) located at Newcastle, Wallsend, Beresfield, Carrington, Mayfield and Stockton.</p> <p>Key points included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pollutant levels were lower than benchmark concentrations for NO₂, SO₂ and NH₃, • PM₁₀ levels above the benchmark of 50 µg/m³ were recorded on 14 days across the network. Stockton recorded PM₁₀ levels above the benchmark on each of these days, Carrington on three days; Newcastle on two days and Mayfield on one day. Stockton recorded one day with the PM_{2.5} level above the benchmark of 25 µg/m³, which also coincided with the PM₁₀ level above the benchmark, • Analysis of elevated PM₁₀ levels and associated wind directions suggested that bushfire smoke and sea salt may have contributed to elevated particle levels at Stockton (Refer to Table 6 and Figures 23 to 32). <p>Mr Riley noted the difficulty of modelling and quantifying bushfire smoke and its impact on air quality. Analysis of bushfire maps provided a context for understanding how smoke may have affected the region, rather than identifying smoke as a definitive source of local particle levels.</p> <p>In response to questions, Mr Riley noted that OEHL routinely investigated the causes of high pollution events, using HYSPLIT modelling*** to estimate the passage of an air parcel before it enters the region. OEHL also is developing its systems to analyse major natural events such as bushfires.</p> <p>[***Hybrid Single Particle Lagrangian Integrated Trajectory Model]</p> <p>The Report included a section on particle levels at Stockton, due to the higher number of days above the PM₁₀ benchmark, compared to other sites in the region. The analysis examined daily and hourly average PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} data recorded at Stockton, since Orica established the AQMS in October 2012. Mr Riley noted that the Lower Hunter Particle Characterisation Study (LHPCS) would provide a more detailed analysis of the composition of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}. Results were expected in early 2016.</p>

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<p>Item 5 (Cont)</p>	<p>The Chair consulted the Committee and opened the discussion to include PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} results for the Hunter, tabled by Dr Whelan on behalf of Mr Craig. Dr Whelan commended OEH on the air quality report for spring 2014. He noted that air sampling results for Stockton, analysed by ANSTO^{***}, suggested that sea salt is a major contributor to PM_{2.5}. [****Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation].</p> <p>Dr Whelan added that Stockton recorded a higher number of days above the PM₁₀ benchmark than any AQMS in NSW and, therefore, residents may conclude that Stockton air quality was the worst in NSW. He reported that community members want to know more and look forward to the results of LHPCS.</p> <p>Dr Whelan suggested that if the LHPCS found that sea salt was a major contributor, it would not take away community perception that local industry and coal stockpiles were sources of pollution which required regulation. Dr Whelan also noted that A/Prof Adrian Barnett of Queensland University of Technology reported that there was no safe level of air pollution and Australian capital cities could expect a major increase in health costs if the daily PM₁₀ levels reached the NEPM [National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure] benchmark of 50 µg/m³.</p> <p>Mr Gilligan confirmed that days with potentially high sea salt content in PM₁₀ at Stockton did not discount the potential for industry to contribute to PM₁₀ on those days. He noted that the EPA commissioned the LHPCS to gather evidence to inform the management of air quality in Newcastle. Mr Gilligan added that if the LHPCS suggested that industry was a major contributor to PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} at Stockton, then the EPA would act to reduce potential sources of industrial emissions, as in the Upper Hunter. He noted that in response to the findings of the Upper Hunter particle characterisation study, the EPA introduced programs to reduce dust emissions from mine sites and woodsmoke emissions from domestic heaters.</p> <p>Mr Riley noted that Stockton was the only AQMS in NSW within 300m of the sea and therefore did not meet the criteria to be classified as an AQMS for comparing PM₁₀ levels and NEPM standards.</p> <p>The Report found that hourly PM₁₀ levels above 75 µg/m³ at Stockton occurred predominantly during east to northeast winds in spring 2013 and spring 2014, indicating the potential contribution of sea salt to particle levels (Refer to Figure 19).</p> <p>The Report also suggested that sea salt contributed more to PM₁₀ levels at Stockton, than at Carrington. This finding prompted OEH to review international research on the transportation and deposition of sea salt. Studies comparing sea salt dry deposition rates at variable distances from the seashore found that large amounts of sea salt were deposited close to the shore. OEH would continue to investigate elevated PM₁₀ levels at Stockton and to provide updates in future reports.</p> <p>In response to questions from Dr Whelan, Ms Bell confirmed that OEH had a Scientific Rigour Statement which ensured that decisions were based on robust scientific evidence. The EPA agreed to provide an electronic link to the statement.</p>

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Item 5 (Cont)	<p>ACTION 1. EPA to provide to NCCCE an electronic link to the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage Scientific Rigour Statement.</p> <p>The report included a seasonal analysis which compared PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} levels during spring 2014 and spring 2013 at OEH's long term AQMS at Newcastle, Beresfield and Wallsend as well as the data collected by Orica and OEH at Stockton.</p> <p>Key points included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PM₁₀ levels were above the benchmark of 50 µg/m³ on 14 days, in both spring 2014 and spring 2013, and • PM_{2.5} levels were above benchmark of 25 µg/m³ on one day in spring 2014 and eight days in spring 2013 <p>The seasonal analysis also provided an overview of climatological conditions in NSW and the Lower Hunter for spring 2014 and spring 2013. Key points included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Lower Hunter experienced drier conditions in spring 2014 than spring 2013, and temperatures very much above average in spring 2014 and spring 2013, • A NSW bushfire emergency occurred in early spring 2013, followed by severe thunderstorm activity and rainfall very much above average <p>The Report concluded that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In spring 2014, most days above the above the PM₁₀ benchmark occurred during onshore winds, most likely in association with sea salt. • In spring 2013, most days above the PM₁₀ benchmark occurred in association with bushfires, especially the NSW bushfire emergency. <p>Ms Woodroffe offered to provide to the Committee the air sampling results reported by ANSTO for the Stockton AQMS, reported during the period of Orica's operation of the site.</p> <p>ACTION 2. NCCCE Industry Representative, Ms Woodroffe, to provide to NCCCE the PM_{2.5} particle characterisation results from the ANSTO air sampling program recorded for the period of Orica's operation the Stockton air quality monitoring site.</p> <p>Mr Banyard tabled his analysis of monthly pollutant levels and associated wind directions compiled from the Stockton AQMS data of 2012. He concluded that sea salt in onshore winds most likely contributed to elevated particle levels. He also noted the potential for smoke from bushfires in the Blue Mountains to be transported across Sydney, offshore and then northward, to be recirculated onshore at Stockton.</p> <p>The Chair noted that analysis of AQMS data offered a great potential to increase community understanding of the complexity of local air quality issues.</p> <p>Dr Whelan proposed that the Committee supported the recommendations proposed by Mr Craig, that is, to note the high number of days above the PM₁₀ benchmark at Stockton in 2014, and to request early feedback from the LHPCS to see if these the high levels were a health issue from industrial pollution or more related to sea salt.</p>

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<p>Item 5 (Cont)</p>	<p>Mr Riley explained that the statistical techniques used in the analysis for the LHPCS provided the most reliable results when full year data set was analysed. Therefore, it would be difficult to provide feedback before the full results of the study became available in 2016.</p> <p>The NCCCE resolved the following with respect to the recommendations proposed on behalf of Mr Craig. The NCCCE noted the Stockton community's concern regarding the potential contribution of industrial sources, in contrast to sea salt, in the elevated PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} levels at Stockton. The NCCCE noted that the analysis in the LHPCS would be important in providing evidence to help address the community's concern.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION 1: The NCCCE recommended that OEH provided the community with information on the characterisation of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} at Stockton as soon as it became available, to help address community concern regarding the potential contribution of industrial sources, in contrast to sea salt, in the elevated PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} levels at Stockton.</p> <p>The Chair noted the draft report, thanked Mr Riley and commended OEH on the report. The Chair also thanked Dr Whelan and Mr Banyard for their contributions.</p> <p>ACTION 3: NCCCE to provide comments on the draft <i>Newcastle Local Air Quality Monitoring Network Seasonal Report: Spring 2014</i>, to EPA by 25 February 2015.</p>
<p>Item 6</p>	<p>Outcomes of NCCCE Planning Session held 27 January 2015</p> <p>The Chair opened discussion on the report prepared by the independent facilitator of the NCCCE Planning Session.</p> <p>The report categorised NCCCE priorities as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Actions relating to the communication of environmental issues, and 2. Issues relating to the future of NCCCE, noting that tenure expired in November 2015. <p>Actions proposed by NCCCE to improve communication and understanding of environmental issues included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite representatives of industries and community groups to speak to NCCCE about their organisations' activities, with the aim of sharing knowledge and building relationships, • Review the recommendations of the <i>Lower Hunter Air Quality Community Research Project</i>, identify actions relevant to NCCCE and devise an implementation approach, • Determine and implement a communication approach to increase community understanding of water quality, contaminated sites and regulatory of industry, and • Recommend how to communicate the results of the OEH air quality monitoring reports to the wider community

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<p>Item 6 (Cont)</p>	<p>In discussion, Dr Whelan noted the relevance to the NCCCE of Recommendations No.5 and No.14 in the report on the NSW Government Upper House Parliamentary Inquiry into the operations of the EPA. He proposed further discussion of the EPA's response to the recommendations. He reported a degree of community concern about the EPA's ad hoc pattern in establishing consultative committees. He noted that the Hunter Community Environment Centre had provided its engagement principles to the EPA as an example of an effective protocol. He recommended that any EPA protocol included a means of involving the community in evaluating the transparency of stakeholder engagement practices.</p> <p>Ms Bell noted that the EPA welcomed the opportunity to present at the Inquiry. She advised that the report on the Inquiry legally required a response from the NSW Government within six months.</p> <p>The Chair noted that the NCCCE was the first committee established by the newly formed EPA. He concurred that a consistent protocol for committees made sense.</p> <p>Regarding the future of the NCCCE post November 2015, committee members agreed that further information was required before making a recommendation to the EPA in July 2015.</p> <p>Relevant considerations included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-constituting the committee under Division 4 of the of the <i>Protection of the Environment (Administration) Act 1991</i>, as is the case in the Upper Hunter, • Minor amendments to the committee's Terms of Reference, provided the change was not the sole driver of a long approval process, and • Expanding the composition of the committee to include relevant agencies. <p>ACTION 4: NCCCE to discuss, at the next meeting, the future of NCCCE post 2015 and to make a recommendation to the EPA in July 2015.</p> <p>To build on the outcomes of the planning session, the committee members commenced adding detail to a communications matrix, provided in the report by the independent facilitator. The matrix provided a structure for planning the NCCCE's communications with the wider community. Considerations included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What environmental issues does a group want to know about? • Who is the target audience? • How can the message be delivered? • How will effectiveness be evaluated? <p>The committee completed the matrix on the issue of 'How to access the air quality data and interrogate it?'. The committee identified the following issues for further planning: water quality, contaminated sites and 'How do you access help on environment issues? Which agency?'. The committee agreed to provide feedback before the next meeting.</p> <p>ACTION 5: NCCCE members (a) to add input to the communications matrix provided in the report on the planning session of 27 January 2015; and (b) to return the input to EPA by 5 pm 4 March 2015.</p>

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Item 7	<p>Update on EPA Lower Hunter Air Quality Projects <u>Lower Hunter Air Quality Community Research Project by Macquarie University</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPA published the report on 20/20/15.and EPAs response. NCCCE informed by email. • Ms Bell advised that the EPA is using the report's findings and recommendation to build on its ongoing work the Lower Hunter community on air quality issues. While the report confirmed more work needs to be done, the EPA's work in the Lower Hunter aligns with the recommendations of the report. Since the report was commissioned, new initiatives have addressed some of the findings of the study. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Commissioning of the three new air quality monitoring stations in Newcastle, the Lower Hunter Particle Characterisations Study and the Lower Hunter Dust Deposition Study. These projects have involved the community from the outset and have ongoing community input, ○ Ongoing improvements to the EPA website; an electronic newsletter to stakeholders called <i>EPA Connect</i>, and engagement in social media including Twitter, ○ Completion of a compliance audit of coal loading and unloading facilities to enforce improvements to reduce coal dust emissions, and ○ Plans to engage the community in Citizen Science projects. <p>In discussion, Committee members made the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful Citizen Science projects require an effective link to policy making • The finding that the community mostly finds out about air quality via local newspaper and radio aligned with the NCCCE's recommendations to the EPA in 2013, that is, for the EPA to improve its credibility and build community trust by increasing its use of local radio as a communications channel and regularly featuring senior staff. <p>Ms Bell confirmed that the EPA will continue to work closely with the NCCCE and the Kooragang Island Industry Forum to implement the recommendations of the report.</p> <p><u>Lake Macquarie-Wyong Air Quality Monthly Reports</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first report is being updated to include feedback from the community workshop in December 2014. The EPA expects to publish the final report as soon as available. <p><u>Lower Hunter Particle Characterisation Study</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Project Management Group meeting was held on 22 January 2015. • The Third Progress Report was published at on 2 January 2015 • Sampling is into the fourth quarter, on track for completion in late February / early; March 2015. • The final report is due in early 2016. <p><u>Lower Hunter Dust Deposition Study</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Project Reference Group Milestone meeting was held on 11 February 2015. • AECOM presented the final version of the methodology paper. Publication is imminent. • Preliminary results for October 2014 to January 2015 indicated that the sampling regime is satisfactory. The report will be finalised in early 2015.

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Item 8	<p>General Business</p> <p>Mr Banyard reported community concern noise and vibration impacts of the wire rope works at Mayfield. Mr Thomas advised that that his company undertakes the work and offered to brief the NCCCE on his company’s activities in April 2015.</p> <p>ACTION 6: NCCCE’s Industry Representative, Mr Thomas, to brief the NCCCE on the wire rope making activities at Mayfield and associated noise and vibration impacts, at the meeting on 22 April 2015.</p> <p>Mr McBain suggested that NCCCE invited the EPA and NSW Health to provide a briefing the NCCCE on the issue of lead contamination in soil. He referred to the ABC TV program <i>Catalyst</i> on Tuesday, 10 February 2014, which investigated current sources of lead exposure and its developmental effects on children.</p> <p>Mr Gilligan advised that the EPA recently established the Lead Expert Working Group (LEWG) to review lead exposure management in north Lake Macquarie. Mr Gilligan noted that Prof Mark Taylor, interviewed on <i>Catalyst</i>, was a member of the LEWG. The EPA currently is establishing a Community Reference Group to work in partnership with LEWG. Mr Gilligan advised that the EPA would email to the NCCCE a link to the <i>Catalyst</i> program and he would provide a briefing to the NCCCE after the EPA had commenced community engagement with the local community of north Lake Macquarie.</p> <p>ACTION 7: EPA to send to NCCCE a link to the ABC TV program <i>Catalyst</i>, broadcast on Tuesday, 10 February 2015, which investigated current sources of lead exposure and its developmental effects on children.</p> <p>ACTION 8: EPA to brief the NCCCE on the EPA’s review of lead exposure management in north Lake Macquarie and the regulatory framework for contaminated sites.</p> <p>Mr Mackenzie supported Mr Gilligan’s offer to organize a briefing on contaminated sites for NCCCE. He also requested an update on the EPA’s implementation strategy for managing non-road diesel emissions.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION 2: EPA to provide an update to NCCCE on the EPA’s Diesel and Marine Emissions Strategy.</p> <p>Dr Whelan noted that the latest report of the National Pollution Inventory is due in late March 2015. He suggested NCCCE request a briefing on the report, highlighting the findings of the report and what has changed since the previous report.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION 3: EPA to facilitate a briefing to NCCCE on latest National Pollution Inventory report as soon as possible after it is published.</p> <p>Mr Gilligan reminded the NCCCE that the <i>Protection of the Environment Operations (General) Amendment (Newcastle Air Monitoring) Regulation 2015</i> commenced on 6 February 2015. The email notified the committee on Monday 16 February 2015. The regulation implements the funding mechanism for the three new industry-funded air quality monitoring stations in Newcastle. He advised that the EPA is consulting with industry regarding the payment of industry levies.</p>

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Item 8 (Cont)	<p>Mr Riley advised the NCCCE that OEH published the NSW Annual Air Quality Statement on 13 January 2015. OEH has published the reports for the last three years, provided an annual summary of air quality from the 43 station in NSW. The publication received good media coverage. NSW air quality was better during 2014 than 2013, due mainly to a less bushfire activity.</p> <p>Mr McBain requested that EPA reintroduced to the NCCCE meetings the circulation of summary information from the EPA Environment Line.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION 4: EPA to circulate at NCCCE meetings summary information received by the EPA Environment Line since the previous meeting.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Committee Members, OEH and EPA for their contributions and thanked Dr Whelan for attending in the absence of Mr Craig.</p>
Item 9	<p>2015 Meeting Dates</p> <p>Meetings in 2015</p> <p>18 Mar – NCCCE planning continued.</p> <p>22 Apr – Summer Air Quality Report and Seasonal Analysis</p> <p>22 Jul – Autumn Air Quality Report and Seasonal Analysis</p> <p>21 Oct – Winter Air Quality Report and Seasonal Analysis</p> <p>Other meeting dates may be discussed at the planning session in January 2015.</p>
Meeting ended at 7.50 pm	

ACTION ITEM LOG	DUE	RESP
NCCCE MEETING NO. 34, 18 February 2015		
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