

# TAYLORS ROAD 'LYNDHURST' LANDFILL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STEERING COMMITTEE

## MEETING 4

5.00 – 8.00pm, Thursday 19 June 2008

Meeting room, SITA Environmental Solutions, Hallam road Landfill,  
Hallam Road, Hampton Park

### **MEETING MINUTES**

(As confirmed at 5th CESC meeting)

## 1. Attendees and apologies

### **CESC members present**

Tony O'Hara – Hampton Park Progress Association  
Jim Houlahan – Dandenong Residents and Ratepayers Association  
Jason Wood – Lynbrook Residents Association  
Thelma Wakelam – Residents Against Toxic Waste in the South East (RATWISE)  
Geraldine Gonsalvez – Community interests in the SE (including RATWISE)  
Jim Memeti – Councillor, City of Greater Dandenong  
Malcolm Baker – Director, Development Services City of Greater Dandenong  
Rob Wilson – Councillor, City of Casey  
David Richardson – Manager Engineering and Environmental Services, City of Casey  
Grant Tishler – Manager, Property and Development, Pellicano Pty Ltd.  
Andrew Tytherleigh – Executive Officer, Victorian Waste Management Association (VWMA)  
Laurence Halvy – General Manager, Fresh Start Bakeries, Dandenong South  
Michael O'Keeffe – Post Collection Manager, SITA Environmental Solutions  
Evan Kyriakopoulos – Operations Manager, SITA Environmental Solutions  
George Tsivoulidis – Regional Manager, EPA SE Metro Region  
Alexa Powell – Community Relations Officer, EPA SE Metro Region  
Bruce Turner – Phoenix Facilitation (CESC facilitator)

### **Visitors (non-members)**

(none)

### **Apologies/absent**

Mark D'Agostino – Environmental Health Officer, Department of Human Services  
Ian Jenz – President, Colemans Road Ratepayers Association

## 2. Minutes of previous meeting

Thelma requested further information on the handling of liquid waste and sludges. At her suggestion, an amendment was made to section 4 of the draft minutes to read that *residual treated and immobilised solids were disposed of in landfill*. With this change the CESC approved the minutes.

## 3. Terms of Reference

The group agreed there were no further amendments required for the TOR document. The document was circulated for members to sign; those CESC members who were absent will have the opportunity sign the document at the next meeting(s).

**Action 1: A copy of the signed TOR to be circulated to members and the final wording to be placed on the EPA website.**

Bruce circulated a protocols document that consolidated a number of "housekeeping" type matters agreed by the CESC in previous meetings that are generally outside the matters referred to in the TOR. The document can be updated at any time as new agreements are made.

## 4. Prescribed Industrial Waste (PIW)

Bruce invited the group to reflect on the presentation about PIW from EPA representatives at the last meeting, in particular to see if there were any questions remaining. As indicated under item 2, Thelma requested further information on how sludges are dealt with.

Geraldine asked about what would happen to waste from the desalination plant, what type of waste it would be classified as, and whether it would be disposed of at Taylors Road. She said the community was worried about these questions. George explained that at this stage the waste hadn't been classified. Evan pointed out that until a builder-operator for the plant was appointed and the plant designed, the precise type of waste to be generated could not be known.

Tony suggested that the CESC write to the relevant agency handling the desalination project and indicate its interest and ask to be informed when a decision is made.

**Action 2: Bruce to draft a letter to the relevant agency (DSE) for review by the CESC.**

**Action 3: EPA to provide Thelma with further information about the sludge immobilisation process.**

Tony informed the group he would be participating in the EPA review of PIW policy and regulations. Alexa explained that the EPA was preparing to consult with community, industry, councils and government about the PIW regulatory framework. People who have expressed interest in being involved in the process will have the opportunity to participate in public workshops and/or provide written submissions.

A discussion paper is expected to be released for comment in July 2008 followed by a number of workshops in August to enable interested people to have input. Bruce informed the group that he had been asked to help facilitate the workshops.

Bruce asked the group what further information they would like about PIW. Tony said he was very interested in what sorts of things SITA is planning to do at Taylors Road and when they expect to do them. Bruce responded that this information would provide a useful context within which the CESC could help plan the communication with and involvement of the wider community; which is its main role.

Tony also commented that he believed there was a lot of good information on the EPA website, but it was difficult to find. He said a summary document on PIW could be useful with references to existing EPA publications for further information.

**Action 4: SITA to brief the CESC on its plans for the future at Taylors Road.**

**Action 5: 'PIW summary' to be added to the list of topics for the information kit that the CESC is looking at producing for the wider community.**

## 5. Landfill update

### Recent site visits

Evan reported that a number of people who hadn't been able to attend the CESC site visit had made arrangements to be taken on a tour. These included Laurence Halvy and staff from Fresh Start Bakeries, Grant Tishler and Mark Dreyfus (Federal MP for Isaacs).

Laurence said he came away from the site visit feeling comfortable that the facility was well operated. Grant indicated that previously he had no knowledge of how the site was run but it seemed to be a professional operation. Thelma commented that it is an impressive operation, albeit one that is in close proximity to other uses, including residential properties.

### Dusty loads procedure

Evan provided copies of SITA's procedures for handling dusty loads to the group as discussed at the previous meeting. He said these had been in place since 2001 and formalised in the Environment Improvement Plan and OH&S system since 2005. Geraldine suggested that the truck driver handling the dusty load observed during the CESC's site visit on 2 May 2008 should have been wearing a mask. Evan

said the waste transport company had been packaging the waste appropriately since that incident. Thelma indicated she felt it was strange that the CESC happened to witness the one-off incident and said she had been left wondering how many other times things like that happened.

### Cell construction

The group discussed the cell construction information sheet which had been developed by Evan and circulated in advance of the meeting. Feedback from the group indicated that it gave clear explanations about the history of cell construction and specific information about each cell, and that it was fairly easy to read and not too technical.

Tony said that he was concerned to know the state of the liners on the older cells and how they would perform over time. Obviously it was not appropriate to dig them up to find out. Evan replied that an expatriate Australian from Canada, Professor Kerry Rowe, has studied and written on liner integrity. There is evidence to suggest that clay far outlasts synthetic liners and that it does depend on the environmental conditions. Thelma referred to problems with liners in the US and UK and wondered how these could be compared to conditions at Taylors Road.

Geraldine asked why landfill operators don't use granite as a liner. Evan replied that rock tends to fracture and hence is too permeable.

George said that the clay has to meet certain specifications before it is used as liner material. He suggested another way to check the performance of liners was to monitor groundwater.

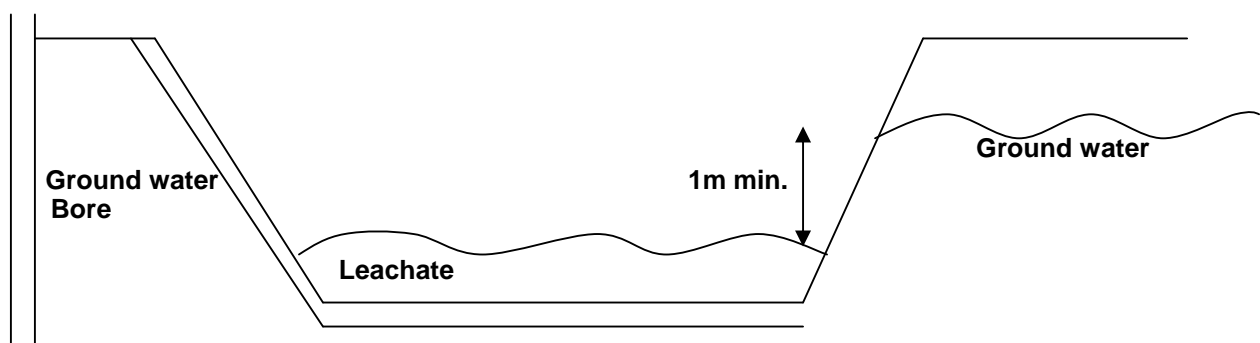
Jim Houlahan asked whether the clay in the original cells had been tested for elasticity and other relevant properties. Michael explained that Taylors Road was the first landfill to have cells constructed to a level above standard practice. He said that every cell at the landfill had been constructed under the supervision of an independent (non-SITA) consultant. They checked the specifications of the clay that is used as liner material and these specifications have not changed over the life of the landfill. The testing is for a range of properties including permeability and plasticity. Recently, an additional layer of HDPE geomembrane had been added on top of the clay liner in all new cells (with a double layer in the PIW-only cells).

Michael said that while SITA has always had an independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party involved in overseeing cell construction, the company now had an additional 4<sup>th</sup> party audit system, involving an independent EPA-appointed auditor. The auditor is involved in the process of cell construction from beginning to end.

Jim Houlahan suggested that a directional bore could be used to sample one of the older liners to test its integrity. Michael drew a diagram and explained how groundwater is collected from vertical wells outside the landfill and from a network of groundwater pipes under each cell. He said these were more recently monitored and tested as part of last year's auditor recommendations and that the report on monitoring is publicly available. The EPA-appointed auditor, Anthony Lane conducts an annual audit of risk to groundwater and can give direction to SITA on any works required. SITA must act on these requirements – there is no approval necessary from EPA.

Michael also mentioned that the EPA Licence requirement for controlling leachate levels in the landfill was for the leachate level to be maintained a minimum of 1 metre below the surrounding groundwater level. This was to ensure that if there were any leaks in the liners, the groundwater would tend to leak in to the landfill rather than leachate leaking out of the landfill.

*Reproduction of Michael's sketch of bores and groundwater and leachate levels*



- Action 6: CESC members to provide any further comments on the cell construction information sheet to Evan (cc Bruce and Alexa please).**
- Action 7: Evan to circulate the paper he referred to by on cell integrity Prof. Kerry Rowe.**
- Action 8: Tony O'Hara to report on what he is able to find from his own research into the questions he has on cell integrity.**
- Action 9: SITA to arrange for the environmental auditor (Anthony Lane) to attend a future CESC meeting to present on the groundwater auditing methods and recent results.**

### **Landfill Height**

George reported that a question had been raised by RATWISE and another member of the community about the height of the landfill. EPA had looked into the issue and found that the current height of a capped putrescible waste cell at the landfill is 29.7m AHD (equivalent to height above sea-level). The licence states that SITA can fill to a "final landform" of 24m. Evan said that SITA purposely overfills general waste cells with the expectation that the final landform height can be achieved through settlement over time following closure of the landfill. PIW does not settle so these cells are not overfilled. Tony asked what happened in the case where there was layering of PIW and putrescible waste.

George said EPA's position is that the height clause in the licence is a post-settlement height (i.e. the height achieved many years after closure) but he acknowledged that the wording of the licence was ambiguous and that this needed clarifying in the licence. The CESC would be consulted on any licence amendment. Thelma expressed dissatisfaction at EPA's response. She said it had taken a very long time to provide such a simple response which led her to be suspicious about the credibility of the answer.

David said he was impressed at the approach SITA was taking since in his experience subsidence can be a big problem at older landfills. In many cases they can settle too much and form ponds which cause problems; so in his view some overfilling is a sensible practice.

Jim Houlahan queried how one could be sure of the compaction rates at Taylors Road. He suggested a soil test would be required.

In response to a question about how overfilling could affect landfill liners, Michael stated that a SITA-operated landfill in Hong Kong was 140m high and had the same liner system as at Taylors Road.

Malcolm clarified that a planning permit had been granted by the City of Greater Dandenong for the landfill height to be up to 35m. However in order for this to come in to affect, a Works Approval would be required to change the EPA licence. This had not occurred, so the EPA licence continues to set the height limit at 24m.

After further discussion, it was suggested that as a way forward to resolving questions, concerns and ambiguity over the landfill height, SITA would prepare a pre-settlement contour plan backed by credible data on the settlement rate (i.e. the amount settled and period of time it would take to achieve the 24m height limit).

Thelma asked SITA to also provide information on how much airspace for different types of waste was left at Lyndhurst; what has gone/goes in per month of each type.

- Action 10: SITA to prepare a pre-settlement contour plan and supporting data on settlement rates, remaining airspace and filling rates.**

### **Licence conditions**

Michael explained that due to the forthcoming increase in waste disposal levies (up from \$130 per tonne to \$250 per tonne from 1 July 2008) and closure of the prescribed waste landfill at Tullamarine, the Taylors Road landfill had been receiving more PIW than usual. He provided monthly figures for PIW received since the start of the year (from 2,500 tonnes in January to over 8,000 tonnes in both April and May). He said 5,000 tonnes had already been received in June and the figure could well go to 10,000 tonnes as the 30 June deadline for the levy increase approached. He said that under Clause 1.8 of SITA's licence, the company would seek written authority from EPA to temporarily exceed the maximum

ratio of PIW to total waste going in to the landfill of 40% in any six month period. He said SITA's projections indicated the ratio should be back under 40% by October-November 2008.

Michael said that Clause 1.7 of the licence limited the total amount of PIW deposited at the landfill to 35% of the total waste deposited. He said SITA's projections indicated that if all the remaining capacity of the landfill were filled, the ratio of PIW to total waste would be 35% ±2%. He flagged that SITA would like to discuss in more depth with the CESC the implications of clauses 1.7, 1.8 and 1.9 of the licence.

Tony commented that if the Taylors Road landfill, as the only landfill in Victoria that could accept PIW, took 8,000 tonnes per month, it would be full in about 9 years.

*It was agreed* that it would be helpful for EPA to brief the CESC on what licences do and the contents of the licence for the Taylors Road facility to provide a context for more detailed discussion on the clauses flagged by Michael. Evan commented that SITA had applied to EPA to become an 'accredited licensee' which included the requirement for community involvement in an Environment Improvement Plan (see EPA Information Bulletin "Accredited licensee system – Guidelines for applicants" circulated at the first CESC meeting or available on the EPA's website – latest version is Publication 424.3 July 2008).

**Action 11: Copies of clauses 1.7, 1.8 and 1.9 to be circulated to the CESC.**

**Action 12: EPA to brief the CESC on the licence system.**

## **6. Towards a community engagement strategy**

This item was held over for discussion at the next meeting.

## **7. Communications**

Bruce raised the topic of a Sunday Age article of 25 May 2008 which had included quotes about the CESC process from Geraldine and Rob (NB Cr Rob Wilson had left the meeting before this item was discussed). After some discussion the group agreed that it would be helpful to produce a media update on the CESC process that, once endorsed by the CESC, could be released by any member if they were approached by the media.

The topics suggested for the media update were: the fact that the CESC has finalised and endorsed its Terms of Reference; the CESC's interest in finding out about the type of waste to be produced by the desalination plant and where it was to be disposed; the CESC's interest in groundwater monitoring in order to better understand the condition of cell liners; the height of the landfill is on the agenda for further discussion.

**Action 13: Bruce to draft a media update based on the above points for comment by the CESC. Once finalised in the light of the comments, the update can be made available by any member in response to requests for information.**

## **8. Other Business**

George reported that the three fires which had occurred at Taylors Road earlier in the year had been investigated and found to have been acted on appropriately by SITA. Required air emission testing had showed no offsite impacts had occurred.

## **9. Next meeting**

5.00pm – 8.00pm, Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2008.

**Action 14: Bruce to prepare a schedule of meeting dates for the remainder of 2008 for review by the CESC.**

### **Agenda items for the next meeting include:**

- EPA briefing on the licence
- Community Engagement strategy
- Mark Dreyfus' involvement