

# TAYLORS ROAD 'LYNDHURST' LANDFILL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STEERING COMMITTEE

## **MEETING 13**

5.30 - 9.30 pm, Thursday 21 May 2009-05-24

Meeting room, SITA Environmental Solutions, Taylors Road Landfill,  
Taylors Road, Dandenong South

## **MEETING MINUTES**

*(As confirmed at the 14<sup>th</sup> CESC meeting)*

### **1. Attendees and apologies**

#### **CESC members present**

Tony O'Hara – Hampton Park Progress Association  
Helen Russo – Colemans Road Ratepayers Association  
Jim Houlahan – Dandenong Residents and Ratepayers Association  
Thelma Wakelam – Residents Against Toxic Waste in the South East (RATWISE)  
Cr Lynette Keleher – Councillor, City of Casey  
Cr Yvonne Herring – Councillor, City of Greater Dandenong  
Geraldine Gonsalvez – Community interests in the SE (including RATWISE)  
Jason Wood – Lynbrook Residents Association  
Malcolm Baker – Director, Development Services City of Greater Dandenong  
David Richardson – Manager Engineering and Environmental Services, City of Casey  
Laurence Halvy – General Manager, Fresh Start Bakeries, Dandenong South  
Marc Boxer – Department of Planning and Community Development  
Susan Carter – Community Engagement Facilitator, EPA Victoria  
Colin McIntosh – EPA Victoria  
Michael O'Keeffe – Post Collections Manager, SITA Environmental Solutions  
Evan Kyriakopoulos – Operations Manager, SITA Environmental Solutions  
Bruce Turner – Phoenix Facilitation (CESC facilitator)

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

Bruce Dawson – Director of Environmental Services, EPA Victoria  
Claire Davies – Technical Officer, SITA Environmental Solutions (Minutetaker in place of Renee Deverson who was away on leave)  
Roger Parker – Independent Auditor *(present during Item 4 only)*  
Jani Breider – Resident of Hampton Park *(present during Item 5)*  
Graeme Hodgson – member of Tullamarine Landfill Rehabilitation Advisory Committee transition team

#### **Apologies/absent**

George Tsivoulidis – EPA Victoria  
Andrew Tytherleigh – Executive Officer, Victorian Waste Management Association  
Mark D'Agostino – Environmental Health Officer, Department of Human Services

Bruce T welcomed Graeme Hodgson as an observer of the CESC. Bruce T advised that Grant Tishler had resigned from the CESC meetings due to work and family commitments. He said Grant had indicated in his resignation email that the Pellicano Group appreciated the CESC process and has full faith in the participants ensuring the landfill is managed effectively. He said Pellicano wished to be kept up to date with the CESC's progress.

### **2. Minutes of previous meeting(s)**

With some minor amendments to some members' titles, the draft minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the previous meeting.

The latest version of the revised (incorporating changes to membership) Terms of Reference was circulated for re-signing by members and the visitors at this meeting.

### 3. Matters carried over from previous meetings

#### 3 a. Future coordination of the CESC

Bruce T reminded the CESC of the necessary transition from EPA being responsible for sponsoring the facilitator and coordinating the CESC to SITA taking on these roles, in line with community engagement processes at other licensed facilities in Victoria. He noted that SITA had already begun taking the minutes and taking more of the coordination role, and that this change had appeared to be seamless. He reported that EPA had advised it was committed to sponsoring the facilitator until the end of May 2009, after which it was expected that SITA would take over responsibility for this. Bruce T proposed that it would be appropriate for all members of the CESC to keep an eye on how this change affected his behaviour and the running of the process and to raise any concerns. He pointed out that the CESC's Terms of Reference require that the CESC be informed if the facilitator or any other participant becomes aware of circumstances that affect the facilitator's capacity to act impartially – the CESC as a whole will advise as to whether to continue the process with the current facilitator.

The group then discussed the matter. Comments included:

- The transition to full coordination of the CESC by SITA feels premature; not enough notice
- Concerned the group is 'spinning its wheels' on this issue when there are more important things to talk about in relation to the landfill
- The transition would be OK as long as EPA funds remain available (from the waste levy) for the CESC to commission independent work on issues associated with the landfill
- Several members concerned about community perceptions of the 'independence' of the facilitator and process if SITA is paying and coordinating

In relation to the transition being premature, Bruce T reminded members that this matter had been discussed at length in previous meetings (particularly the debrief to the TRL Open Day in December 2008) and that the feeling of at least some members had been that EPA should continue to sponsor the process for another 6 months. He noted that this time had elapsed.

In relation to funds for the commissioning of independent studies, Bruce Dawson suggested the possibility of money being kept in trust for CESC investigations, which would help preserve the credibility of the group. He said EPA was prepared to keep an open mind on this.

It was noted that the Tullamarine Landfill was establishing a similar type of community engagement process to the CESC. This process was proposed to have the independent facilitator paid through an independent 'banker' that held funds provided by the company. If successful, this model might be worth applying to the Taylors Road Landfill also.

**ACTION 13.1: The CESC to monitor the process at the Tullamarine Landfill to see if there is merit in applying similar facilitator payment protocols to the Taylors Road Landfill process.**

In conclusion, Helen suggested that for the process to move forward the group needed to have some trust in the Facilitator and SITA. She suggested members monitor the process and review the matter after 6 months of having SITA covering the costs of the Facilitator.

**ACTION 13.2: CESC members to monitor the CESC process (in particular the independent facilitator role) over coming months, to raise any issues or concerns as they arise, and to review the matter at the end of 2009.**

#### 3 b. Future meeting venues

Members' views about venues were briefly explored at the end of the meeting. Lynette and some others expressed concerns about the health impacts of meeting at Taylors Road. Jason said if meetings were held at Council offices (at the two Councils involved), he would not be able to attend meetings. Some others also supported having meetings at Taylors Road. Evan also commented that there are many long-term serving staff on site who do not suffer health effects from working at the landfill. It was resolved to ask SITA to provide summary data on the monitoring of staff health. In the meantime, meetings will continue to be held at Taylors Road.

**ACTION 13.3: SITA to provide summary data on the monitoring of staff health at Taylors Road Landfill.**

**3 c. SITA Waste Update (bushfire and %PIW)**  
**3 d. EPA summary of impacts of increased levies**  
**3 e. EPA update of review of Prescribed Waste Regulations**  
**3 f. EPA information on financial assurances for TRL**

The above items were not able to be discussed in the time available and are carried over to the next meeting (except for those that are able to be dealt with by circulation of information prior to the meeting).

#### **4. Cell Construction Audit**

Roger Parker (Golder Associates) had been invited to provide a presentation of the cell liner construction, integrity and the audit process.

Bruce confirmed with Roger that copies of his presentation could be circulated to the CESC. The scope of Roger's presentation included the following:

- Landfill concepts
- Cell design process
- Slope stability
- Design output
- Auditing cell construction
- Typical audit process for cell construction
- Parties involved in construction.

A number of questions and comments were raised after the presentation:

Tony asked about the A-ACAP (Australian Alternative Covers Assessment Program) trial at Taylors Road Landfill. Roger explained that this is a five year research project to test the combination of soils and native trees as an alternative to the current conventional (compact clay) caps on landfills. Roger assured the group that this is not a simple, 'cheap' solution. The question of gas management was raised; Michael stated that gas management is one component of the study (looking at the cap's ability to oxidise methane).

[Additional information provided by SITA following the meeting on this study into the use of 'Phytocaps': One of the key principles and potential advantages of phytocaps (plants and soil) is that they are essentially replicating natural systems which are self-maintaining, unlike engineered capping systems. The A-ACAP is a joint project of the Waste Management Association of Australia, the University of Melbourne and industry which is being run at five test sites in SA, WA, NSW, QLD and VIC (Taylors Road Landfill). More information can be found at: [www.wmaa.com.au/aacap/aacap.html](http://www.wmaa.com.au/aacap/aacap.html)]

Roger addressed the issue of the quality of the oldest liners that had been raised at previous meetings. Roger stated that the construction of the cell liners for the older cells at Taylors Road had exceeded the requirements at the time they were constructed. He also stated that Taylors Road Landfill had pioneered many of the clay compaction techniques employed in cell construction across the country.

Roger addressed the CESC's question of how the clay was likely to perform over time. He described the rate at which chemicals would move through the clay. Metals tend to bond to clay and therefore can't move far, whereas salts don't get as attenuated. He said that all liner systems would have some seepage over time, but that the impact of this would depend on the rate of seepage, and on the rate of assimilation by the environment.

Tony questioned whether the chemicals in the co-deposit (domestic and industrial waste) cells would affect the composition (and effectiveness) of the clay liners. Roger reiterated that metals would bond to the clay. He said there would be some changes in the chemical structure of the clay over time. However, the compression forces from the placed waste would help to decrease the permeability of the clay. He assured the group that if there were any problems, it would be picked up in the groundwater monitoring.

Roger then outlined ways that seepage problems, if detected, can be addressed. These include pumping to lower the levels (and therefore the pressure or 'head') of leachate in a landfill. He pointed

out that at Taylors Road, the cells are below the water table; therefore, provided that leachate levels are maintained below the surrounding groundwater level, seepage of leachate is unlikely, due to the hydraulic gradient causing groundwater to seep in if there is a leak. He added that minor localised diffusion outwards may still occur even where the groundwater levels are higher than the leachate.

Geraldine asked whether the subgrade should have been tested before cell construction rather than after, due to possible irregularities across the site. Michael and Roger both assured the group that the cells are dug deep enough into the site to reach natural solid ground. Proof rolling, a common test used in cell construction, of the subgrade prior to construction can determine whether there are any soft spots in the ground. All soft spots are removed and filled with suitable material where necessary prior to the commencement of clay placement.

Jim questioned the performance of the liner systems in situations where a prescribed waste cell is 'laid back' over a putrescible waste cell (e.g. the edge of cell 12A overlaying the edge of cell 11). Roger said that any differential settlement between the cells would create stresses (tensile and compression), but the liner materials are flexible. Michael said that 20% settlement is allowed for during construction and Evan pointed out that there are three layers to the liner system on the prescribed waste cells. It was also noted that there is another liner below the bottom cell in any situation where cells overlap.

**ACTION 13.4: Roger to provide the CESC with his considered view on the likely performance of liners of prescribed waste cells where they are laid back over putrescible waste cells.**

Yvonne asked Roger if the Selwyn Fault or recent tremors originating from Gippsland would affect the clay liner at the landfill. Roger explained that the landfill is like a basin, which during seismic activity would move synchronously with the ground, and the tremors would not cause differential stresses or damage to the liners.

Jim said he had had magnetic resonance testing done on the fault, not in the vicinity of the landfill, which indicated there are fractures perpendicular to the fault. He said he thought it would be valuable to do geoscience work to understand the historical movement of the fault. Roger stated that the Selwyn Fault was some 700 metres west of the landfill (NB the EPA standard for locating landfills is no less than 100 metres from a fault).

Bruce T thanked Roger on behalf of the CESC for his presentation.

## **5. EPA Licence Amendment**

Jani Breider joined the meeting for the discussion of this item. During the initial discussion Jani expressed interest in visiting the landfill during the day to observe the completion of Cell 12C.

Bruce T asked Jani to send her comments on the 'track change' version of the licence amendment to the CESC at the same time as she sent them to EPA. The discussion then focused on the proposed 'pre-settlement' contour plan that had been circulated for the CESC's comment.

Jani commented that the wording in clause 2.40 in the licence amendment should retain more of the original wording and should refer to both a pre-settlement and post-settlement contour plan.

Bruce Dawson emphasized EPA's view that the current height clause is 'unenforceable' and apologized for the confusion this had caused. He said EPA was looking to ensure the maximum height is clear.

Tony and Jani queried the potential for erosion in the lower area on the current contour plan, due to the channelling of water. Colin commented that the proposed contour plan mimicked the grade of the final cap which, with a 5% slope, is very gentle, so erosion should not be a concern. Colin also commented that the slopes on the plan look exaggerated because of the scale used. Helen also raised a related concern about how runoff from the final landform, after closure, would be managed. She was concerned about the potential for off-site flooding.

Jani suggested that the 'after-use' of the land needs to be considered in determining the best shape for the final landform. Jim suggested a 'crown'-style contour, might be preferable to the proposed 'wrinkly' contour plan. Michael explained that the latter plan greatly decreased the height of additional fill material required, thereby lessening the potential impacts on the existing gas management system, and avoiding truck traffic to bring in the extra fill, and other interference associated with constructing a

smoother cap (which would be 4 metres higher). By the end of the discussion, based on the assumption that the site would become open space in the future, several members (at least Yvonne and Tony) had expressed a preference for the 'wrinkly' design of the proposed pre-settlement contour plan, rather than a more traditional smooth domed shape.

In response to continuing concerns about whether the landfill height is compliant with the current licence, SITA representatives indicated that the landfill has been constructed in line with Best Practice Environmental Management (BPEM) guidelines with the intention of it settling to 24 metres in the long-term. The BPEM guidelines indicate that settlement is likely to be in the range of 15%-30%. The site has been filled to allow for 20% settlement. Recent modelling provided to the CESC in 2008 showed that a post-settlement height of RL 24m can be achieved. The group was reminded that the contour levels on the plan refer to heights above sea level, with the boundary of the landfill sitting at about 12 metres above sea level.

While there continued to be frustration at not being able to establish definitively whether the landfill will settle to 24 metres or not, *there was general consensus from CESC members* that incorporating a pre-settlement plan in the licence, and working with where the landfill is at now, represent the most sensible way forward, provided the planning permit contours are met at the completion of filling. Jani also indicated that she agreed the way forward was to work from the existing situation, but said she strongly believed a Works Approval was required in order to include the proposed pre-settlement plan in the licence.

Mal said that ideally the contour plans in the licence and planning permit for the landfill would be brought into alignment. He emphasized that, at a minimum, the pre-settlement plan that is adopted in the licence must enable the contour plan that is in the planning permit to be met at the completion of filling.

**ACTION 13.5: EPA, DPCD and the City of Greater Dandenong to liaise to explore how the alignment of licence and permit will be achieved.**

There was discussion as to whether an EPA works approval should be required, with wider public involvement in the licence amendment. As emphasised above, Jani was a strong advocate for this view. Michael pointed out that a works approval is only applied for when a change is initiated by the licensee. In this case, SITA did not initiate the change and amendments that SITA would like to see in the future (e.g. removal of clause 1.8) were purposely excluded from this amendment, in order to keep it to basic administrative corrections.

Bruce Dawson and Colin confirmed that EPA will be finalizing the amendment in the light of the CESC's feedback in the near future.

## **6. Communication and consultation**

### **6a. Posting of CESC meeting agenda to web prior to meetings**

### **6b. RATWISE call for more consultation and a public meeting**

### **6c. Media release/ community update**

There was insufficient time remaining to discuss the above items. Directly after the meeting, Bruce T emailed the members to explain the outcome of the CESC's review of a draft media release on groundwater monitoring that Bruce had produced after the April CESC meeting. Bruce said he was unable to produce something that was acceptable to all members and which would be brief enough to be potentially picked up by the local papers. As an alternative, he said he proposed to prepare a 'community update' bulletin/newsletter that can be more comprehensive about what the CESC is learning and where to go to get more information. This can be circulated through members' networks and advertised locally. He hoped to have something for the CESC to review by the next meeting.

## **8. Next Meetings**

The next meeting is scheduled for:

5.30 – 8.30pm, Thursday 23 July 2009, at Taylors Road Landfill.