

TAYLORS ROAD 'LYNDHURST' LANDFILL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STEERING COMMITTEE

MEETING 12

5.30 – 8.30 pm, Thursday 2 April 2009

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

MEETING MINUTES

(As confirmed at the 13th CESC meeting)

1. Attendees and apologies

CESC members present

Andrew Tytherleigh – Executive Officer, Victorian Waste Management Association (VWMA)
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
Michael O'Keeffe – Post Collection Manager, SITA Environmental Solutions
Evan Kyriakopoulos – Operations Manager, SITA Environmental Solutions
Susan Carter – Community Engagement Facilitator, EPA
George Tsivoulidis – former Regional Manager, EPA SE Metro Region
Bruce Turner – Phoenix Facilitation (CESC facilitator)

Visitors (non-members)

Daniel Fyfe – Victorian State Manager SITA Environmental Solutions
Renee Deverson – EH&S Compliance Officer, SITA Environmental Solutions (notetaker)
Jani Breider – Resident of Hampton Park *(present during Item 4 only)*
Anthony Lane – Lane Piper (Groundwater Auditor) “ “
Adam Seeley – Lane Piper “ “

Apologies/absent

Laurence Halvy – General Manager, Fresh Start Bakeries, Dandenong South
Grant Tishler – Manager, Property and Development, Pellicano Pty Ltd.
Mark D'Agostino – Environmental Health Officer, Department of Human Services
Marc Boxer – Department of Planning and Community Development

Bruce welcomed Helen Russo as the replacement representative of the Colemans Road Ratepayers Association as a result of Ian Jenz deciding he wished to have a break from his involvement in the CESC.

Bruce advised that he had that day received notice from Thelma that RATWISE had invited Jani Breider to attend the meeting (he also acknowledged that Geraldine, as President of RATWISE, had indicated she understood RATWISE was not in a position to unilaterally invite people to attend CESC meetings). He said he had expressed concern to Thelma at the late notice which made it impossible to confer with members about whether to have Jani attend. Bruce said he had asked Jani to arrive later in the meeting to allow the group to discuss the issue.

Bruce reminded the group that the CESC Terms of Reference gives discretion to him as independent facilitator as to how many visitors can attend a meeting. He said he would appreciate the CESC's input to deciding who should attend. He suggested the CESC protocol on inviting others to attend meetings

(because of their interest or experience that could add value to the CESC's discussion of a particular topic) should be that there is sufficient time for this to be confirmed by the whole group. *It was agreed* by all members present that this would be the future protocol.

Lynette asked why Jani hadn't been invited to be a member of the CESC. Bruce explained that Jani had declined an invitation to nominate to join the CESC, due to her in-principle opposition to the landfill. Nevertheless, he pointed out that, as shown by her contribution to the CESC meeting of September 2008, she had a great depth of knowledge about the licensing and operation of the landfill which could add value to particular CESC discussions. He said it was Jani's potential to deepen the conversation for the benefit of all members, that had prompted him to respond positively to the suggestion that she attend the present meeting for the CESC's discussion with groundwater auditor Anthony Lane.

It was agreed that Jani could attend for the discussion with Anthony Lane.

2. Minutes of previous meeting(s)

The draft minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the previous meeting. Bruce sought confirmation of the level of detail included in the minutes. Comments were made by some members of the CESC that they were happy with the current level of detail.

The group reviewed the actions from Meetings 10 and 11, with the following still outstanding for discussion:

Action 9.7: Michael O'Keeffe to coordinate the preparation of answers to Jani Breider's questions to SITA following her presentation to the CESC. – A copy of these were given to Jani and Bruce at the end of the meeting

Action 10.5: EPA to circulate prior to the next CESC meeting a clearer (e.g. track change) document showing the proposed changes to the Taylors Road licence, including any refinements made in the light of the CESC's discussion of the changes. – Hardcopies were provided to Bruce just before the meeting and handed out at the end

Action 11.2: EPA to provide a summary of the impacts of the increase in waste disposal levies. – carried over to next meeting

3. Re-signing the Terms of Reference (ToR)

The revised ToR were circulated to the CESC members for signing. Lynette said that she would prefer future meetings to be held at another facility such as the City of Greater Dandenong Council Offices and that she preferred to not sign the ToR until they were changed to include a different meeting venue. Bruce suggested that the location for future meetings be discussed, time permitting, when the dates for the next meetings were confirmed (i.e. at the end of the meeting – NB due to lack of time, this discussion had to be deferred to the next meeting).

4. Brief Progress Updates

a) Towards a clearer licence

Bruce advised that he had received copies of a 'track change' version of EPA's proposed amendments to the licence. George confirmed that copies could be shared with interested community members outside of the CESC and that any comments to the EPA should also be circulated to the full CESC.

George explained that the version to be circulated did not contain the contour plan as this was the subject of a planned meeting (or meetings) with officers of the City of Greater Dandenong and the Department of Planning and Community Development.

Tony reiterated his concerns with the deletion of clauses in the licence; he felt that there should be reference to another document which demonstrated the changes over time.

Geraldine and Thelma said they felt it would be beneficial to have a public meeting to give an opportunity for the community to discuss the height clause and any other issues. There was discussion of the nature of the current EPA amendments which were not out for formal consultation. In contrast, if there were to be any significant changes to the operation of the landfill then these would require a works approval which would require full public consultation.

b) Prescribed Waste Regulation Review

It was noted that new draft regulations for the management of prescribed industrial waste had been released by the EPA for public comment and review. It was noted that SITA along with other members of the CESC had made submissions to the EPA regarding the proposed changes.

5. Groundwater Audit

Anthony Lane (of Lane Piper and Associates) had been invited to provide a presentation of the groundwater audit process as well as the current groundwater audit report and its recommendations. He and his colleague Adam were introduced to the members of the CESC as was Jani Breider who joined the meeting for this presentation and discussion.

In response to a query from Thelma, Anthony confirmed that copies of his presentation could be circulated to the CESC. The scope of Anthony's presentation included the following:

- Auditor duties/responsibilities and potential liabilities
- EPA compliance checks on auditors and benefits of being an auditor.
- Taylors Road Audit scope and objectives
- Local geology and hydrogeology
- Groundwater monitoring regime
- Groundwater monitoring network – where and why
- Current findings and future investigations.

A number of discussions and comments were raised throughout the presentation with some key points recorded below:

- The *scope of the audit* (in terms of distance from the landfill) is submitted to EPA for review and is determined by the local geology and flows. Anthony said monitoring is done up to 2kms away but the most relevant distance is about 100m.
- The *direction of groundwater flow* is in towards the site which was once a quarry and has depressed the water table through evaporation and pumping of groundwater. Anthony said the natural flow in the region before the quarry was towards the NW. He said he has requested more bores to be installed to look more closely at the local flows, particularly in the north of the site.
- There can be some *recharge* of groundwater through rainfall as well as through creeks and streams.
- SITA currently pumps *groundwater* through the cell construction process and this is *discharged to* the Eumemmering Creek with testing of this water occurring before each discharge for a range of contaminants as per the landfill's licence requirements. If any contamination were found, no discharge would occur and the water would be treated as leachate or sent off site for treatment by another operator.
- The key question that guides the groundwater monitoring is "is the groundwater contaminated by what is in the landfill" – the *testing regime* relates to the toxicity of the chemicals in the landfill.
- The most south-westerley of the bores shows unusual contamination that may well be the effect of a nearby burnt out car.
- The *level of leachate* in the landfill is monitored fortnightly and must remain greater than 1 metre below the level of the groundwater surrounding the landfill.

- The picture of what is happening in the groundwater is becoming more accurate year by year, as more data is accumulated and *more bores are installed*. Daniel confirmed that the recommendations in the previous year's groundwater audit report had been adopted although he explained that there can be unavoidable delays when adopting some recommendations. He cited the example of the lease agreements for three newly installed offsite bores on adjacent private land which took up to a year to finalise in negotiation with the landholders.
- the *Hydrogeological Assessment* of the landfill is due to be completed this year. It is a 'one off' assessment.
- Older groundwater modelling that was undertaken by Golder Associates to demonstrate the flow conditions is taken into consideration; the current investigations build on this previous knowledge.
- A Statewide program of mapping is undertaken for the protection of groundwater as a resource. Anthony confirmed that there is such a program undertaken.
- Rain increases the gradient of the groundwater, but does not affect its flow rate.

(Those issues that were more fully discussed by the CESC are recorded in more detail below).

The question of whether the *groundwater salinity has changed* over time was explored. Jani referred to a report which stated that the groundwater at the site was originally Segment A2 (501-1000 mg/l Total Dissolved Salts). She noted that the groundwater audit report (November 2008) classifies it as Segment B (1001-3500 mg/l TDS) for the purpose of determining the protected beneficial uses for this water. (NB The audit report indicates a range of levels from 690 to 9000 mg/l TDS). Anthony said his background knowledge and previous historical data indicated that the area around the landfill has always been considered Segment B. He also said the hydrogeological assessment would help clarify this. Anthony sought more details of the report that Jani referred to.

ACTION 12.1: Jani to provide Anthony with a copy of the report which stated that the groundwater in the region was originally Segment A2.

The issue of *liner integrity* was discussed. Jani said she had found reports which indicate that clay liners deteriorate after 15 years. Anthony commented that while clay liners can and do deteriorate to some extent over time the more likely cause of any leakages, if there were any, would be defects in the liner. Anthony said it was not yet possible to draw definitive conclusions from the groundwater monitoring as to the source of contaminants in the groundwater. This is because most of the contaminants found are natural compounds that could come from a range of sources. An exception is chlorinated hydrocarbons (CHCs) but, again, these can come from a variety of sources, e.g. oil that was used for dust suppression on the surrounding dirt roads could have reached the groundwater.

Evan confirmed that the requirement for groundwater to be analysed for CHCs was being undertaken by SITA. Anthony relayed how the monitoring network had recently been updated to include additional core drilled bores around bore BH16 get more information on parameters such as CHCs which could be coming from the leachate and landfill gas treatment systems that are located adjacent to this bore.

Daniel commented that the concentrations of CHCs are in parts per billion (0.0001mg/l). He said CHCs did not generally travel alone in groundwater. He said if CHCs were coming from the landfill it would be expected that there would be other contaminants present that were from the leachate 'soup' produced in the landfill. These are not present which suggests they could be from another source such as the degreasers used in the workshop on site. He agreed that more information and a better understanding are required.

Yvonne asked if there are any other *contaminants of concern*, apart from CHCs, that have been detected in the groundwater. Anthony indicated that dewatering activities during quarry operations and drainage of lowlands for agriculture can often lead to the concentration and release of salts and heavy metals which are naturally occurring in soils, and that these have been detected in the groundwater at the site. He pointed out that, in determining what may be of concern, it is important to understand the source of different contaminants (i.e. what is naturally occurring and what could be coming from the landfill) and the pathways and the potential risk posed to the environment. (NB Anthony's report of November 2008 indicates that most of the contaminants of concern at the site, apart from the CHCs, could also be associated with leaching of heavily fertilised soil in a market garden – p49).

Anthony confirmed that the *groundwater level* is lowering in the area. Geraldine asked what would happen if the groundwater level fell below the landfill. Michael said that under SITA's licence the leachate levels would have to be kept under 300mm from the top of the liners.

Bruce asked Anthony if he could provide any information or opinions on the potential impact of the *Selwyn Fault* on Taylors Road that had been raised by Jim at previous meetings. Anthony said that from his knowledge the Selwyn Fault, which runs beside Arthurs Seat and across Port Philip Bay, is not active or has not been a major source of activity for a very long time. He advised that the recent small tremors felt in Melbourne had been due to another fault based near Korumburra. Tony mentioned that he had seen a fault map suggesting that the Selwyn Fault was in close proximity to Taylors Road compared to other maps.

Thelma asked how much of a risk are *earthquakes* to landfills and how much movement would be needed to cause a risk to groundwater. Yvonne also asked if groundwater was contaminated through such events, how would it be treated.

Daniel responded that if movement caused a rupture to a landfill liner, the groundwater monitoring would show it up eventually and the groundwater would need to be treated in the same way as leachate. There could also be other requirements for groundwater remediation by SITA, as determined by EPA, depending on the level of impact.

Jim stated that he felt that there should be a risk assessment undertaken by an authority (such as EPA) regarding the Selwyn Fault and the potential risks to Taylors Road.

Bruce reminded the CESC that Roger Parker of Golder Associates was to be invited to the next CESC meeting to talk about liner integrity and the cell construction audit process. Evan and Michael confirmed that Roger may be able to provide information in relation to the Selwyn Fault.

Bruce thanked Anthony on behalf of the CESC for his presentation, and it was confirmed that any further questions relating to this presentation could be forwarded to SITA.

6. Communications

Bruce asked the CESC members if they thought it would be worthwhile communicating to the wider community something of what they had learnt about the groundwater auditing. David suggested that this would be a good opportunity to try and clear up any misunderstandings or misinformation in the community.

There was general support for a media release or article as long as it was placed in context. It could promote understanding of what was being done to establish the risks. Andrew said it was important to convey the fact that the groundwater audit process is extensive and ongoing.

Michael stated that due to the significance and high interest in Taylors Road, the groundwater investigations needed to be extremely conservative and extensive; much more so than for other landfills. He said that if there were any risk to the environment or any contamination, SITA would want to be the first to know and to act upon it.

Yvonne summarised that she had learnt that the flow of groundwater means the risk of contamination reaching residential areas to the east (e.g. Lynbrook Estate) is negligible. Thelma said Anthony's statement regarding the slow flow of groundwater also addressed some of her concerns.

Geraldine suggested that it would be beneficial for the community to have a public meeting and possibly invite Anthony to present again. Bruce acknowledged Geraldine's interest in having a public meeting at some point, but suggested in relation to the groundwater auditing it was part of the CESC's role to help communicate what it had learnt through members' networks and a possible media release.

ACTION 12.2: Bruce to compile points for a media release on the groundwater auditing for review by CESC members.

7. Other business

The 'track change' version of the licence amendment was handed out with some members taking spare copies to show interested members of their groups and networks. Bruce reminded the group that the document was not out for formal public consultation. Any comments should come back through members to EPA (and cc'd to the full CESC). The contour plan referred to in the proposed amendment will be circulated once EPA has discussed it with the City of Greater Dandenong and Department of Planning and Community Development.

ACTION 12.3: CESC members to provide comments on the proposed amendment to EPA (cc the CESC).

8. Next Meetings

Michael highlighted that Roger Parker will be invited to provide a presentation on cell liner construction, integrity and the audit process. Therefore it is preferred to spend as little time as possible on the licence amendments at this meeting.

The next meetings are scheduled for:

5.30-8.30pm, Thursday 21 May 2009.

5.30-8.30pm, Thursday 25 June 2009.

Issues recorded on a 'Fridge door' sheet (for discussion at a future meeting) were:

- Selwyn Fault
- Quality of oldest liners
- How are holes in liners fixed

It is hoped that all these issues can be addressed at the next meeting in discussion with auditor Roger Parker.

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