

## Meeting Notes

### Eraring Ash Dam Expansion- Community Consultative Committee (CCC)

Meeting No. 4

Thursday 17 December 2020 – 3.30- 5.20 pm

Location: Zoom Meeting

**Members present:** **Chairperson:** Margaret Harvie (Chairperson)

**Community representatives:** Joan McCarthy, Ron McCarthy, Gary Blaschke, Neil Wynn

**Origin representatives:** Tony Phillips- Group Manager Operations Eraring, Lauren Barnaby - Group Manager Environment and Community, Fernanda Maluly Kemeid - Ash Strategy and Management Lead.

**Persons in attendance:** Emma Scutella (notetaker)

**Apologies:** Kim Grierson, Derek Pola & Colin Bright, Cr David Belcher (absent)

Item no.	Description
1.	<p><b>Welcome, Acknowledgement of country, apologies and introductions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Margaret Harvie (MH) welcomed people to the meeting - advised she had apologies from Kim Grierson, Derek Pola and Colin Bright</li> <li>Acknowledged the ongoing Covid-19 situation and Tony Phillips (TP) advised that the restrictions for the company are still in place but they are hopeful that a site visit is possible for first meeting next year</li> </ul>
2.	<p><b>Declarations of pecuniary interest and other interest from those present</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No declarations from any members</li> </ul>
3.	<p><b>Actions from Previous Meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MH advised that the Terms of Reference had been resent and remain unchanged – these are the current ones that the group is operating under.</li> <li>Gary Blaschke (GB) in the context of the action of the last meeting providing the CCC with the link to monitoring data raised an issue with the EPA monitoring station at Wyong that he suggests are not monitoring data on ozone, nitrogen dioxide and carbon monoxide and sulphur dioxide – either not monitored or are not showing up in the results.</li> <li>GB raised the discrepancies between monitoring stations. GB asked MH as the representative of DPIE to raise issue with DPIE re this missing information and discrepancy.</li> <li>MH advised that she is the independent chairperson for this CCC. The monitoring results from this project is within the remit of this meeting but the process of what the EPA monitors or does not monitor in terms of air quality is a broader issue that would need to be taken up with DPIE directly.</li> <li>GB agreed to take up the issue of data being monitored with DPIE and report back to the CCC on this.</li> </ul>
4.	<p><b>Correspondence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MH pointed to the correspondence from DPIE regarding restorative justice – this was in response to communication from Joan McCarthy (JM) and GB – as circulated with the agenda.</li> <li>Subsequent correspondence from GB about unanswered questions.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Restorative Justice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JM spoke to her correspondence and concern that Origin were censoring items on the agenda. Feels it was dismissed without discussion and it hasn't been addressed. Would like open discussion without censorship.</li> <li>• JM explained restorative justice – the irregularities between proponents and DPIE are concerning. Restorative justice gives the community equal voice like the proponent.</li> <li>• JM suggested bringing in a facilitator which she believes is provided for in the current CCC terms of reference – a person to explain how that might evolve.</li> <li>• Ron McCarthy (RM) raised HCEC (Hunter Community Environment Centre) meeting coming up – advised that the report produced in 2019 is worthwhile reading for the group.</li> <li>• RM advised that Origin's responsibility at the moment is to not increase pollution</li> <li>• RM spoke of groundwater seepage and solutions – groundwater curtain should be provided</li> <li>• RM advised that State Government is responsible</li> <li>• GB pointed out that the CCC are stakeholders as are Origin – we are just trying to work it out</li> <li>• JM made a point that Origin do not have the right to amend agenda items – a concern</li> <li>• RM advised that if the committee were unhappy, they could write to the State Government and advise they aren't satisfied with rules – this is where the problem comes from</li> <li>• MH advised the terms of reference have been agreed. Changing the process to be something different to what the CCC process currently is, is not part of the remit of Origin. Origin are asked through the Conditions of Approval to form and operate a CCC in accordance with the guidelines provided.</li> <li>• JM pointed to the provision under membership in the Terms of Reference for "advisors or specialist to be called upon to attend meetings to provide information as required".</li> <li>• MH invited JM to invite a person to attend the next meeting to address the group on restorative justice. JM agreed to find a guest speaker to address the next meeting.</li> <li>• MH reiterated her communication to the group about the invitation for anyone with questions, including previous questions that remain unanswered to email them at least one month prior to next meeting</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION: JM to advise of guest speaker to speak on restorative justice at next meeting</b></p>
5.	<p><b>Update on Project Progress</b></p> <p><b>Also including action item with Origin advice on the monitoring of water that is put into Lake Macquarie</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lauren Barnaby (LB) spoke to EPL (Environment Protection Licence) water quality monitoring as part of a presentation to the CCC.</li> <li>• GB asked if there were plans for more monitors near Lake Earing (including the new recreation camp). LB advised that there are other ambient EPA and due diligence monitoring sites within Lake Macquarie that aren't shown by the extent of this map. Origin are not required to put in any additional monitors at this time but LB advised</li> </ul>

	<p>that monitoring may be required as part of the development application and environmental assessment process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neil Wynn (NW) wanted to know if some of the monitors are deep bores. LB advised that they are. NW asked how deep and FMK advised the groundwater was at approximately 3 metres, however this varies depending on rainfall and the location of the monitoring point on site.</li> <li>• NW asked if there are additional monitors not showing. He wanted to know if government or Origin checked the contamination levels when Origin took over to know the level of contamination and the contamination they are responsible for. LB advised there were investigations for all sites in 2015 and agreements made with private entities and government as to the contamination liability. LB advised that Origin conducted baseline monitoring and subsequent risk assessments which were submitted to the EPA. The monitoring outcome was that the level of contamination was low and an acceptable risk to Human Health and ecology.</li> <li>• NW asked if it was Origin’s obligation to inform EPA if they found something in the sites other than what EPA require. LB advised that if there were any significant changes in sampling results, Origin would advise the EPA (this is in line with the <i>Contaminated Land Management Act</i>).</li> <li>• NW asked how many bores Origin actually has? LB will take this question on notice. NW will put together a range of questions – this to be part of the list of questions for response in advance of the first meeting in the new year.</li> <li>• GB advised there are 11 sites shown on map. He would like to know the total sites and how often they are monitored. LB advised that the EPA monitoring locations are sampled monthly for surface water and quarterly for groundwater. The sampling for the <i>Contaminated Land Management Act</i> is completed every 6 months</li> <li>• GB advised the community is concerned about cumulative impact.</li> <li>• LB advised that it would be useful to have technical experts explain to the CCC the significant improvements that have been made to manage contaminants. Also, to explain groundwater movement and cumulative impacts.</li> <li>• LB advised that they are reviewing the Hunter Valley report and have engaged a company to do this. Part of the brief is to crosscheck the assumptions and assertions of that report and determining where these do not correlate with the information Origin has. This can be discuss once this review is complete.</li> <li>• GB asked how Origin can have a draft Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) when monitoring is being missed. LB explained that the proposed activities are an extension of those that are existing on the ash dam, and do not require data from the DPIE monitors (as per Garys suggestion). The AQMP sets out the methods for the management, monitoring and mitigation of the potential source of dust particles from the Ash Dam. LB indicated that air quality is a specialist science and Origin can get a specialist to speak to that directly.</li> <li>• RM stated that the water monitoring points are still a compromise – doesn’t mean it’s not happening everywhere else. If you want to find out the real story you have to do more monitoring and that is a State Government responsibility.</li> <li>• NW asked if the Origin team are aware of what is going on with Muddy Lake. LB advised that she understands there is a plume of type of weed. GB advised it was <i>Salvinia</i>. LB advised they were told by Lake Macquarie Council they had put some type of weevil in there to help contol it. LB also advised that the EPA contacted Origin regarding the</li> </ul>
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	<p>weed, and Origin investigated the matter and confirmed that there were no operational issues that would be contributing to this in the lake.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TP advised that Origin don't discharge anything to Muddy Lake apart from stormwater</li> <li>• NW pointed out that the exit from Muddy Lake to Lake Eraring has been heavily modified by Origin. Could it be that this modification has affected the lake? Because Origin has manipulated the area, they should also carry the responsibility for this. LB advised the modification has been in place for 40 years when the power station was constructed and to her knowledge there has never been an issue until now. Origin is also not responsible for this area.</li> <li>• GB would like Origin to be conscientious enough to at least look into the situation and see what they can contribute.</li> <li>• LB advised that Origin don't have any jurisdiction to do anything in that area.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION:</b> LB to have conversation with Council regarding the Muddy Lake issue and report back to the CCC.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Origin to organise presentation from air quality specialist for a future meeting.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Origin to organise a technical expert explain to the CCC the significant improvements that have been made to manage contaminants.</p> <p><b>QUESTION</b> - NW - how many bores Origin has?</p>
6.	<p><b>Presentation on Ash Dam Dust Control Capacity Upgrade</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fernanda Maluly Kemeid (FMK) spoke to presentation about the ash dam dust control upgrade</li> <li>• GB questioned why there was no monitoring station to the western side of ash dam give concern about offshore winds. FMK took the question on notice, the location of monitors was defined by a dust management specialist</li> <li>• GB asked about increased water for the expansion. FMK advised that the water from the decant pond is pumped into tanks, so no additional water is used for activities such as dust management.</li> </ul> <p><b>QUESTION:</b> GB asked why there was no monitoring station to the western side of ash dam?</p>
7	<p><b>Report on complaints</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LB advised of one complaint regarding dust to EPA. The investigation is still inconclusive of where the dust/smoke smell came from. It may have been from fires.</li> <li>• GB pointed out that if there were NW winds and the monitoring station at Wyong isn't reading the particulates at that time then how do you know. LB advised that there is a monitoring station at Morisset as well.</li> <li>• GB pointed out if there has only been one complaint officially made there are probably a million people out there complaining but are too scared to make a formal complaint. Air quality is an issue in the community even if you aren't getting official complaints.</li> <li>• MH pointed out that she understands that people can make confidential complaints to the EPA but acknowledged that people do not always go through the steps involved in complaining.</li> <li>• GB raised that the penalty for breaches aren't serious enough, only a slap on the wrist that doesn't do anything.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LB indicated that Origin needs a bit of credit due to significant improvements in dust management system in last 24 months. Origin is really trying to not impact community. Origin is also happy to speak to people in community with concerns at any time.</li> </ul>
8.	<p><b>Round the room with what we are hearing from the community and questions.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>NW</b> asked TP about Vales Point power station receiving millions of dollars from the government to upgrade turbines. Is this distorting the market and why would Origin not make a formal complaint?</li> <li>• TP advised that it would have been a government incentive and that Eraring would have had that same opportunity. We will certainly be looking to take opportunity coming up in relation to expansion into renewable energy.</li> <li>• <b>NW</b> asked if we really need Vales, does Eraring have capacity to ramp up and cover it? TP advised that at the moment Vales Point is still required. Need to cater to the circumstances of summer and firming up capacity alongside renewables.</li> <li>• <b>GB</b> asked if the EPA investigation into the impact of coal ash has begun at Eraring? LB advised that it has not yet, but they expect to hear from them in the new year.</li> <li>• <b>GB</b> asked about Modification 4 to Chain Valley Colliery expansion and the potential 20mm subsidence – could this potentially impact the ash dam or its expansion? LB advised they are required to look at any impacts to Origin’s modification and they are in talks with them. Will be keeping a close eye on it and working with them. Will be ensuring we protect our assets.</li> <li>• <b>GB</b> advised that there is continuing concern in the community even if complaints aren’t coming through.</li> <li>• <b>JM</b> – the community would like to have discussion where we recognise that we are all in this together and have a common issue.</li> <li>• <b>RM</b> is disappointed that Council isn’t represented in the meetings. <b>MH</b> indicated that David was on the start of the last meeting but seemed to drop off and it was assumed he may have had technology issues.</li> <li>• <b>NW</b> asked TP about the use of Taprogge balls for cleaning. Did Eraring previously use sawdust? TP advised Taprogge balls are used to keep the scum off the heat exchanger tubes. Occasionally they do escape and there is a daily inspection that looks for those. Sawdust is used for leaks in system, sawdust plugs fine leaks.</li> <li>• <b>NW</b> asked if it was correct that just sawdust was used in the past to clean the system? TP advised that not since he has been there – it was always Taprogge – he can get back with an answer to that.</li> <li>• <b>NW</b> asked if Origin should be attending the HCEC meeting? TP advised they haven’t been invited yet but would be interested. <i>Forum scheduled for 1pm to 4pm Saturday 27 February 2021.</i></li> <li>• <b>NW</b> stated that Vales have recently blamed the quality of water in Lake Macquarie for them exceeding their requirements. What does TP think about that?. There are many sources into the lake. Some licence limits are extremely close to the baseline of what is in the lake already.</li> <li>• <b>NW</b> asked if Eraring are monitoring the water before it goes into the station? LB advised that seasonally there are changes to the quality of water but not generally seeing anything unusual or significant.</li> <li>• <b>MH</b> asked for any further questions to be submitted by 25<sup>th</sup> February.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>ACTION:</b> MH to follow up Council (Cr David Belcher) to ensure participation of a representative for the future CCC meetings</p> <p><b>QUESTION:</b> Was sawdust used for cleaning the system in the past?</p>
.	<p><b>Next meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Next meeting 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020 – 3.30pm. The aim that this is in person on site. The hope (Covid willing) is to have a tour of the site and then to have the meeting commence at about 4.30 or 5.00.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Close – 5.20 pm</b></p>