

MEETING NOTES

Subject: Boral Deer Park Community Liaison Committee meeting
Location: Boral Deer Park Quarry Training Room, Riding Boundary Road, Ravenhall
Date & Time: 13 March 2014 – 5pm

Minutes: Paul Jackson, Stakeholder Relations Manager (Southern Region), Boral Property Group

Attendees:

1. **Joe & Frances Carabott** – Neighbouring residents
2. **Wendy Bitans** – Neighbouring resident
3. **Tom Meskos** – Deer Park resident
4. **Marion Martin** – Deer Park resident
5. **Clare Brennan** – Albanvale resident and Albanvale Residents' Association
6. **Eyal Cohen** – Neighbouring land owner
7. **Steve Finlay** – Melton City Council
8. **Geoff Gilbert** – Department of State Development, Business and Innovation
9. **Richard Marks** – Environment Protection Authority, Victoria
10. **Chris Bydder** – Environment Protection Authority, Victoria
11. **Alice Phung** – Environment Protection Authority, Victoria
12. **Lorraine Harrison** – Brimbank City Council

Boral personnel:

- **Richard McCarthy** – Business Manager, Boral Waste Solutions
- **Darren Gregory** – Operations Manager, Boral Western Landfill
- **John Stewart** – Compliance Officer (Environmental), Boral Western Landfill
- **Lauren Trewin** – Quarry Supervisor, Boral Deer Park Quarry
- **Peter Longhurst** – Production Manager, Boral Concrete
- **Paul Jackson** – Stakeholder Relations Manager (Southern Region), Boral Property Group

Apologies:

- **Cr Nola Dunn** – Melton City Council
- **Stefan Gangur** – Neighbouring resident
- **Peter Batur** – Resident
- **Sam Muscat** – Deer Park resident
- **Rachel Tosolini** – VIC Department of Justice
- **Matt Williams** – Plant Manager, Boral Deer Park Concrete

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The following notes are taken from presentations and conversations conducted as part of this community meeting. The content, while representing an accurate summation of proceedings, should not be taken to represent exact dialogue unless specifically minuted as such.

Meeting notes are reviewed at the start of each meeting to identify any items in need of correction.

NOTE: *Ahead of the commencement of this meeting, a number of residents and Boral personnel visited the Pinegro green waste facility. Residents were met by Pinegro's Site Manager and given an explanation of the operation and its processes.*

Members are reminded Pinegro is an independent business with no connection or affiliation to Boral, other than through the Boral-owned land which Pinegro leases to conduct its business. Following the site inspection, members returned to the quarry for the start of the meeting.

Meeting opened – approximately 5:10pm

1. Welcome and apologies

Paul Jackson (PJ) welcomed everyone to this session of the Community Liaison Committee (CLC) and gave thanks on behalf of Boral for everyone's time. Noting a number of new faces around the table, those in attendance were asked to offer a quick introduction for the benefit of others.

Referring to the agenda, PJ indicated the business for this meeting had been re-arranged in line with previous feedback from members. Information from the Quarry, Concrete and Asphalt business was dealt with first so that greater focus could be given to the Landfill operations later on.

PJ also addressed a request from an interested local resident asking that future CLC meetings be alternated between Wednesdays and Thursdays. The move would allow the participation of residents who have expressed interest in attending but who are not usually available on Thursdays.

It was indicated this had the support of the Boral team if non-Boral members were agreeable. Through subsequent discussion the idea was supported.

2. Previous meeting notes and matters arising

PJ then referred to the notes of the 28 November 2013 CLC meeting and asked for any matters arising. In doing so, he asked members to reserve discussions relating to the Landfill operations until the Landfill section of the meeting.

PJ further indicated he had identified two matters arising which he thought of interest to members. The first was that the required Annual Performance Statements for the Landfill had been completed and were now publicly available through the Environment Protection Authority (EPA).

The second issue concerning a meeting between Boral, the Department of Justice and Riding Boundary Road neighbours re the truncation of the road by the Regional Rail Link was deferred due to the absence of members related to the topic.

A third matter arising in relation to the recording of meetings was raised as a result of recent email correspondence. Copies of this email were distributed to those attending.

It was firstly asked why the latest meeting notes did not identify who had asked questions or made comments, noting this had been the case with previous meetings.

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PJ explained the notes had been produced by himself and were the first which he had submitted to the group following his taking of the chair role in November. He added the notes were consistent with a style which had become a standard for community meetings in Boral.

The practice of not naming members (other than Boral employees) in the notes was a long-standing preference in the interests of assuring individual privacy. A member then asked if the meeting notes could return to identifying non-Boral contributions to the meeting.

PJ then asked those attending whether there were any objections to this request, adding that Boral would be more comfortable knowing there was a full consensus toward resuming this practice. Some members indicated their comfort, while one did not want to be named for reasons which were subsequently discussed.

A number of members gave no indication either way. Accordingly, PJ said he would opt for a discreet approach and ask each individual member outside of the session as to what their individual preference would be.

The member who authored the email was then invited to elaborate further. The member explained they were not happy with the way the meeting notes frequently failed to capture the context in which certain statements and points of view were presented, undermining their meaning.

The member further explained the notes were often written in a tone which was self-serving to Boral, and failed to record important admissions by Boral which were not necessarily positive for the operations.

While the efforts Boral goes to in arranging and recording each meeting are appreciated, the member explained they thought the company was being over-cautious in its noting of proceedings at the expense of being candid.

The member emphasised they were not questioning the truth of the notes, but the resulting impression a reader could gain. The member further expressed concerns that now the notes are published to the Deer Park website, the need for accurate portrayal was further heightened.

The member concluded by saying that as a result of this feedback, the notes were failing to do their job and they could not support them. Accordingly, the member further indicated they did not want their name mentioned in future documents.

PJ said Boral noted these concerns, then asked for any other input. It was asked whether there was an option to audio record the meetings so there was a reference in the event of a dispute.

PJ indicated this could be considered, however Boral would need to check the provisions of Victoria's privacy legislation before offering this as a solution given his experience with similar NSW laws.

One of the EPA representatives suggested that Boral could follow the example of the landfill at Brooklyn which also supports a CLC. In their example, an independent note taker is arranged to assist with the transparency of their minutes.

PJ asked whether the CLC at that site was required as a condition of its planning permit or whether it was managed voluntarily by the business, as in Boral's case. Those attending were uncertain and the EPA representatives undertook to provide the Committee an answer.

Another member noted that Boral employees were identified in the notes but not residents. PJ explained that as it was the business which hosted the Committee and it was the actions of the business which affected the community, naming employees was considered appropriate.

The discussion concluded with PJ mentioning the concerns raised would be taken on board by Boral and considered ahead of the next meeting. Apologies for this meeting were then noted.

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3. Boral operational reports

a) Asphalt

PJ informed the meeting that as no representative from the Asphalt business was present, he would attempt to go through the information supplied. Recent projects to which the Deer Park plant had contributed included work on the West Gate Bridge during the Christmas break, the Deer Park Bypass and Regional Rail Link.

It was noted the West Gate Bridge work included a response to 'delamination' of the bridge deck surface. **Darren Gregory (DG)** from Landfill explained from his knowledge of asphalt that delamination is when the bonding material between the surfacing layers fails.

A member asked in the face of media coverage which criticised the job done on the bridge surface, were any retractions printed given the incorrect information which was published. DG mentioned VicRoads made comment at the time aimed at presenting more accurate information.

The presentation concluded with a note that Asphalt's injury frequency rate had halved across Victoria during the past six months, that the site is concentrating on equipment reliability improvements at present, and options for the upgrade and replacement of plant remained under consideration.

b) Quarries

PJ then invited **Lauren Trewin (LT)** to update members on activities at the Quarry. LT began by mentioning drill and blast monitoring results for the past period had shown no exceedences, with 13 blast events undertaken since the previous meeting.

The quarry is progressing back into 'zone 6' which is near the Landfill. In response to a question about where the blasting face is currently located, LT explained it is facing back toward the quarry and landfill operations.

A member whose property is in proximity to the quarry asked about the pit's current distance from their home. LT mentioned extraction was moving out of that part of the property for the time being.

Another member asked if the quarry was the main or sole supplier to the Regional Rail Link which LT indicated was the case for the Deer Park to Wyndhamvale section. However, she also pointed out there were many other suppliers supporting the project.

To conclude the section, LT mentioned new fencing had been emplaced along Hopkins Road and that the Northern Grasslands were currently subject to weed control activities.

c) Concrete

PJ then asked **Peter Longhurst (PL)** to give an overview of Concrete's activities. PL began by speaking about the Regional Rail Link's impact on the business – production output has doubled as a result of the project over the past 12 months, and also required input from Boral's Werribee plant.

Reference was also made to the impending permanent truncation of Riding Boundary Road by the Regional Rail Link and its consequent effect on truck movements. While the change would result in slightly longer journeys for customers, it would also virtually remove all trucks from Robinsons Road.

A member asked if there were any plans for another entrance into the site from the new Christies Road extension under construction. PL explained there was not, with only a short right turn lane being provided by VicRoads.

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DG further explained that Boral had objected to the road layout at the design stage given the unsuitability of the arrangements in the immediate area of the operations for heavy vehicles.

d) Landfill

NOTE: *The Quarry and Concrete representatives departed the meeting at this point. The Department of State Development, Business and Innovation representative also departed on the basis the Department's jurisdiction does not cover the Landfill operation.*

A representative from Brimbank City Council arrived at this point and introduced herself to the meeting.

PJ then invited DG to commence presenting information on the Landfill's activities.

DG began by informing members of progress on the construction of new cell 2M. The clay cell liner placement has been completed, while the GCL and high density polyethylene (HDPE) layers are midway through installation. Completion is expected in May, with EPA auditing to follow.

In relation to capping, interim works have been completed for cells 2H, 2I, 2J and 2K. Planning of the final capping of cells 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, 2E, 2F and 2G is continuing.

Also continuing is the design of the new leachate management dam for which approval was gained in 2013. A member mentioned that the Landfill's Work Authority says leachate is to be treated and asked whether that meant the dam would be connected to the sewerage system.

DG said that the business has a long-term plan to build an on-site treatment works and this could then eventually permit a connection to sewerage. The plant's role would be to remove contaminants prior to discharge into the sewer system.

In reference to litter management, DG told members that the new 12-metre high fencing installation had been completed and proven successful in recent high wind events. Mobile litter fences at the tip face had also been installed, with additional new mobile fences under construction.

It was asked whether the existing six metre and new 12 metre fences were designed in a similar way and used the same material.

DG explained the angles used in the new net and previous netting were inclined in a way to capture the most material, but could not go over the tipping area like a canopy because of its size. The higher fence had to be re-engineered to increase the number of panels, thus reducing the risk of failure.

Another question was asked as to whether the new 'high' net would help in extreme winds. DG explained it was a critical component of an overall solution, but was not a stand-alone solution.

In response to a question about the tip face and coverage, DG mentioned the face sits between 1000 and 1300 square metres during the day, reducing overnight because of lower volumes coming in. The face is opened up with the traffic influx during the mornings, with cover material applied daily from around 11am onwards.

Coverage is continuous on windy days. The cover material is clay-based and is of sufficient density that it can't be removed in windy conditions. DG also added the site does not have a single large tipping face open for an entire day.

Moving onto the subject of odour management, DG informed the meeting that 40 additional gas wells were commissioned at the Landfill during December. Surface spraying of de-odourising agents was ongoing and investigation of a fixed neutralising system was underway.

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The Landfill's daily monitoring program was continuing and new steel lids for the 'deep burial hole' have been commissioned. Training is also being arranged for site personnel on the Australian Standard for odour detection – this involves 'calibrated noses' who are people trained to detect and identify differences in smells. DG thanked the CLC for suggesting this previously.

An EPA representative asked how employees are selected for involvement in the site's existing monitoring program. DG responded by saying a rostering system involving different on-site employees is in place.

It was suggested by the representative that monitoring should be undertaken before the rostered employee arrives at work to avoid issues of de-sensitisation.

A further question was asked as to what measures are undertaken if odours are detected during routine monitoring. DG explained that the first priority is to figure out the type and therefore potential origin of the odour as that determined the reactive measures.

An EPA representative then asked how different odours, such as that alleged to emanate from Pinegro, were accounted for. DG then showed a graph of internal odour monitoring results for January and February which revealed of 317 samples taken by Boral, 72 odour instances were identified.

Of these, 41 were assessed as green waste type odours, 17 as Landfill type odours, three as asphalt type odours and 11 as other odour types (from other sources).

Discussion then moved on to the garbage trucks taking waste to the Landfill. A member raised that there should be regulations in place which required the vehicles to be deodorised after depositing their waste and leaving the site. This has been raised with a local State MP.

The EPA representatives present agreed with this and that mentioning it to elected officials was the first step toward gaining this change. They added that keeping vehicles properly cleaned and maintained was essential to minimise odour, not just deodorising.

Another member enquired as to whether the EPA could instruct the Council-owned trucks to deodorise and clean their vehicles in this manner. **Richard McCarthy (RMcC)** said he would be prepared to raise this issue with the peak Metropolitan Waste Management Group.

A further member then raised that for the past two years, they had complained about odours from the site. The member claimed the odour was intensifying and becoming increasingly frequent. The community is becoming frustrated at the lack of answers on these issues.

DG said that he understood this frustration which was shared by employees of the site. The business has not gained certainty as to exact on-site sources because when reports are received from the public and a monitor is scrambled to investigate, the issue may not be noticed as strongly as has been reported by the complainant.

Members were once again reminded of the importance of lodging a report directly with the site so that immediate action can be taken to identify and reduce the problem. Reporting to the EPA was also again encouraged. A remark that this has been going on since 2003 was made by a member.

A question was asked as to whether the economic viability of enclosing the active tipping face and cell, as is done in Europe, had ever been investigated. The EPA representatives mentioned they had not heard of this being done in Australia, however it is a likely direction for the industry to head.

It was also mentioned that incineration was not a solution which is encouraged for dealing with waste. RMcC added that technologies had been developed in Europe which burned waste for energy out of necessity as there is no space for landfills, but these were extremely expensive.

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A resident then asked if any analysis had been undertaken on how far odours could travel. They added that on the issue of waste trucks, their experience had been that when the trucks are new, there is not a lot of odour.

However, after a while the odour starts to 'permeate' the trucks. In their experience, the odour becomes worse in hot weather and in their case a pressure cleaning system had to be installed at their site to fix it.

A question was then asked about whether Boral could use recycled water to address this issue and the escape of litter. DG explained that it's not possible to use water in this way as it tends to filter down through the waste and generate leachate, adding to odour management issues.

DG also confirmed water is only used on site for dust suppression purposes via water carts. Investigations into a dispersal system are currently underway.

Returning to the internal odour monitoring graph, a member asked what happened with the remaining 245 samples which were not attributed to an odour source. DG said in all of those instances no odours were detected.

A question was asked as to what residents should do outside of Boral's business hours when reporting odours. Members were again reminded of the site's telephone and email contact details, and that information can be registered with the site weighbridge team during overnight hours.

EPA representatives were then asked what they are doing with the community's complaints. The EPA is recording all complaints and using them to guide their further investigations into definitive odour sources and for monitoring compliance by Boral and Pinegro.

A member then tabled a letter to the meeting confirming the local community's ongoing concern and frustration about the impact of odour from the Landfill on the surrounding area and the lack of information and consultation about the extension application.

Also included was correspondence for a local child and their parent expressing concern over the application and its potential effects on the area's future.

The member mentioned their concern and anger that Boral had been saying through local media that the CLC had been informed about the extension application in July 2013 but that copies of the application were not made available until September.

Another member supported this view, stating it is contradictory to publicly say the role of CLC members is to share information with the community when access to the information at hand was prevented. They also said it should not be the CLC's role to highlight to others that Boral's operations are present and how they work.

It was also raised that the site's licensing was confusing members of the public because the EPA licence says that items such as asbestos can be accepted, while Boral is publicly stating that they won't take these items at the site.

Conversation then moved onto the issue of buffering zones. It was asked whether Boral's overall operations comply with recommended buffering zones. To further clarify the question, it was asked whether recommended buffers applied from buildings and structures, or uses.

An EPA representative said they understood the zones apply to uses. There are recommended buffers for the quarry and landfill. The quarry's buffer takes into account issues such as ground vibration and noise whereas the Landfill's buffer serves a different purpose.

Buffers are inserted to protect other surrounding land users from existing uses and to prohibit anything which is incompatible being built too close. As publicly stated, the Landfill's recommended buffer is 500 metres.

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The EPA representative went on to say the buffers did not provide for issues of 'reverse encroachment' – situations where incompatible uses were being proposed too close to operations such as Boral's.

It was noted that the EPA's Best Practice Environment Management (BEPM) guidelines also relate to land uses.

Several members then commented on perceived shortcomings with the state's planning system which, in the case of Boral's local operations, allowed such buffers to fall across other people's properties, impacting their use. Noting the predicament, it was suggested Boral should acquire such affected lands.

The meeting then discussed the capacities of the remaining land already approved for landfilling. In answer to a member's question, RMcC said there was an estimated 5 to 10 years worth of capacity left, with variables including intake volumes, design, approval processes and capital availability all influencing the lifespan.

The accuracy of the 179 million cubic metre figure for the entire landfill extension, quoted through local media, was then raised. At first, Boral representatives suggested they were not sure where this figure had come from, but it was then pointed out by a member it was the sum of several other figures included in the extension application.

It was raised that using figures from the extension application, at a current estimated 840 000 cubic metre annual intake, the requested extension land space would take 213 years to fill. Members asked what Boral's estimated timeframe was – the response was 30 to 40 years.

To qualify this projection, it was explained to members that the ability to landfill the available space would depend on the viability of establishing each individual cell, the approval processes involved, conditions placed on each individual cell, and market demand.

It was requested that Boral provide a more accurate estimate of the time it expected to use the proposed extension land space, including explanations of the assumptions used to account for the variables discussed.

The land area forming part of the extension application was then shown on a map as requested by a member.

Finally, a member asked if there was any current research available on the best practice management of similar landfills in close proximity to residential areas. RMcC explained that through its membership of groups like the Metropolitan Waste Management Group and contact with the EPA, Boral was kept across the most-up-to-date information and practices.

4. General business

NOTE: Due to the length of the meeting to this point, a number of resident members, the Brimbank City Council representative and an EPA representative had to depart the meeting for other commitments.

PJ then moved the meeting into general business. In doing so, and noting the time, he made a brief reference to a recent announcement by Boral to form a joint venture with American building concern USG. The venture will increase the capacity of both companies in primarily the plasterboard field.

PJ then invited **Richard Marks (RM)** of the EPA to offer his presentation to the members. RM thanked members for the invitation to the meeting and began by recapping the EPA's role as an approval authority and also for compliance purposes.

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Referring to the Boral and Pinegro operations at Deer Park, RM outlined that the EPA first noticed an increasing complaint trend during September 2013. A program of compliance inspections, investigations and odour surveillance programs has been undertaken since.

Graphs showing the number of odour reports to the EPA and number of inspections carried out were then shown. The main findings of these inspections were shared with members for both the Boral and Pinegro sites.

RM then confirmed the EPA's current actions which include working with the Metropolitan Planning Authority on the precinct structure planning process around the operations, further community engagement, ongoing odour surveillance and continued investigation of complaints.

Members were then reminded that for the EPA to take action, reports needed to be received promptly by the Authority and subsequently confirmed by EPA staff. Those reporting would then be required to sign affidavits and appear as witnesses in any court prosecution.

To assist with management of the issue, members were urged to keep a record of odour instances, note the duration and strength of the odour before reporting, and make the report at the time the instance occurs.

Given the departure of many attendees by this point, PJ indicated he would share copies of the EPA presentation with the members once the meeting notes were released.

With no further business being raised, PJ suggested the next meeting take place on 25 June.

NOTE: *Following the meeting it was pointed out by a member that the CLC's usual meeting frequency is on a four monthly basis. Accordingly, the 25 June suggested date falls well inside this window. It was agreed a new suggested later date be identified and issued with the meeting notes.*

The meeting closed at approximately 7.45pm.