

**WESTERN TREATMENT PLANT
Community Liaison Committee
MINUTES OF MEETING
24 February 2009**

Present	Apologies
Carney Doyle (community member)	Simon White (community member)
Alex Christo (community member)	Monika Schott (community member)
Linda Parkinson (community member)	John McElvaney (community member)
Murray Brown (Food Science Australia)	Clinton Rodda (Southern Rural Water)
Ray Humphriss (WREC)	Murray McIntyre (DSE Port Phillip Region)
Bart Keogh (Southern Rural Water, for Clinton Rodda)	David Hill (Melbourne Water)
Marc Cassanet (EPA)	Mark Mason (City West Water)
Greg Aplin (City of Wyndham)	Trevor Gulovsen (Melbourne Water)
Michael Naughton (Barwon Water)	
Max Coster (DSE)	Facilitator
Andrew Shannon (Parks Victoria)	Michael Keough (Melbourne Water)
George Judkins (Melbourne Water)	
Brad McLean (Melbourne Water)	Minutes
	Tom Pawley (Melbourne Water)
Guests	
William Rayner (Parks Victoria)	
Ken Munro (VicUrban)	
Michael Horkings (VicUrban)	
Hillary Hastings (EPA)	

(Before the meeting, members and guests undertook a one-hour tour of the farming and agricultural areas at WTP, with Peter Nilon, Manager of Werribee Agriculture, Melbourne Water as guide.)

1. Welcome by the facilitator/apologies

The meeting started at 6.20pm.

Michael Keough welcomed guests to the meeting: Andrew Shannon (Parks Victoria - guest of William Rayner) Ken Munro and Michael Horkings (VicUrban) and Hillary Hastings (EPA - guest of Marc Cassanet).

William Rayner was welcomed as Parks Victoria's representative, attending for the first time.

Apologies were received as above.

2. VicUrban Presentation – 'Riverwalk'

Ken Munro gave a presentation on the proposed Riverwalk residential development, Werribee, in the area bounded by the Maltby Bypass and Farm Rd.

Ken responded to questions related to:

- Traffic management
- Provision of recycled water to the site
- Inclusion of entertainment and retail facilities
- Planned public transport including train stations
- Proposed location of schools.

In response, Ken explained that:

- provisions could be made in the planning of the development to alleviate local traffic build up
- the Department of Treasury and Finance is the decision maker for major road projects and would consider such things as whether to provide roads early or when people are already living there
- that there is support from City West Water for recycled water provision
- the development is proposed as a 'neighbourhood centre' with a mix of housing types, not an 'activity centre' as designated under Melbourne 2030, so facilities such as theatres would not be included.

Michael Keough thanked the VicUrban team for their presentation. Following discussion indicated that traffic management was a concern for the local community and would need to be considered during the planning stage.

3. Previous minutes and business arising

The minutes were endorsed (Ray Humphriss and Murray Brown). Michael Naughton's name had been omitted in the first draft of the minutes distributed. The minutes had been re-drafted to include his name.

There was no business arising.

4. Regular reports

Melbourne Water Report

The report was tabled and George Judkins presented the highlights.

George advised that Antoinette Dimakis (Compliance & Reporting Co ordinator), had tried to liven up the report but it is often difficult as she is reporting on static projects. The language of the report has also been changed so that not as many technical terms are used.

Attention was drawn to 3.2 of the report. The Main Southern Carrier upgrade works will result in a duplicate channel. Section 7 was also mentioned and the Biogas Production table was explained.

George informed the committee that power generated at the plant would only be used on site at WTP.

In relation to Section 9, George explained that the bird count observations conducted in December were very positive. The platypus survey of the Werribee River was also positive, with three healthy male platypuses found (albeit with deep scarring from rubbish in the river). However, one had since died as a result of being caught in litter in the river.

Regarding the bar chart in Section 3, George clarified that the red columns should read as "bay discharge", not just "discharge".

Marc Cassanet explained that:

- discharge to the bay was still required to keep the bay processes healthy, as it is a delicately operating ecosystem
- nitrogen is a big part of this process to provide nutrients for micro-organisms
- investigations are underway to determine what levels of nitrogen in the bay keep the bay healthy and what would be a tipping point for the ecosystem
- the EPA is investigating this along with other agencies.

Brad Mclean explained that it is hard to manage the system, as changes in the ecosystem can take 3-4 years or even longer to become noticeable (example of a species of wader bird now not eating worms but scavenging instead due to the loss of worms from lower nutrient levels).

It was asked whether any increase in discharge to the bay would affect the amount of available recycled water and Brad replied that it was first necessary to find out which particular nutrients are important for the ecosystem, then filter them out of the water, thus not reducing the amount of recycled water we have to use.

In response to a question about the strategy to reduce nitrogen levels in the bay,, Brad explained that there was a target 2000 tonne reduction in Nitrogen levels to the bay. Marc Cassanet continued that the estimates made for the target reduction when the strategy was formed would not have been precise, but fairly accurate, and that it takes many years to work out. George Judkins explained that based on scientific knowledge at the time in 1995, 12,000 tonnes per year of Nitrogen into the bay was identified as a critical "tipping point" for the bay's ecosystem, and that was why we needed to reduce Nitrogen levels entering the bay.

In response to a question about what measures WTP is taking to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, Brad replied that:

- electricity use is Melbourne Water's prime greenhouse gas emitting activity. Cattle farming is the next biggest emissions source
- Melbourne Water is doing more work on covering a lot of the waste product to trap gasses
- there are nitrous oxide reduction/ removal projects currently underway

In response to a question about using trees as carbon sinks, Brad replied that tree planting as "carbon sinks" is not being undertaken, but reducing emissions can occur through a combination of activities and there are lots of opportunities such as the planned move away from cattle farming.

A question about whether Melbourne Water tests salinity levels in the Werribee River was taken on notice with information to be provided to the committee.

ACTION: Provide information to the committee about whether salinity levels in the Werribee River are monitored

The committee agreed to a proposed extension in time to 7.45pm.

EPA Report

Marc Cassanet outlined the main points from the EPA's report. There were two reported complaints relating to odour at the WTP during the reporting period.

The Werribee Irrigation District has had an environmental audit conducted and the results are currently being reviewed.

Hillary Hastings explained the EPA's restructure and how it is intended to help improve environmental outcomes by improving client relations and providing a more consistent approach to their work.

ACTION: Distribute the EPA's new operating structure to committee.

Barwon Water Report

The Barwon Water Report was tabled and Michael Naughton reviewed its main points. Michael apologised for not making the report available before the meeting.

He advised that Barwon Water had just received the Supreme Court verdict on the Long Term Biosolids Management Project. The Supreme Court dismissed an appeal by a local community group. Michael advised that works had begun on the project, and that there would be no odour problems due to the staging of the works.

Marc Cassanet advised that the EPA was of the opinion that this was a good decision and a good plan as the project provides a wide range of reuse options for the waste. It will also lead to a 45% reduction in greenhouse gasses emitted from the drying of biosolids compared with the current system of management.

The committee had no further questions or comments.

7. Close

Michael Keough thanked Peter Nilon on behalf of the committee for the tour of the WTP farms. Members were impressed by Peter's knowledge and commented on how interesting and informative the tour was.

Michael reminded the committee that an invitation had been sent to all members inviting them to participate in consultations for the development of an Ecological Character Description of WTP. Consultations would start on 27 February.

Michael thanked everybody for their attendance, including guests and new members.

The meeting closed at 7.45pm.

Actions from this meeting

Action	Responsible
Provide information to the committee about whether salinity levels in the Werribee River are monitored	MK
Distribute the EPA's new operating structure to committee	MK