

# How am I feeling about dust/this meeting?

Ignored/deaf ears

How do you gauge health?

It could be easily fixed

Surprised by how bad it is!

The whole of Melbourne is responsible

Feel like we are 2nd class citizens!

Bewildered, dismayed

How will the problem be solved?

The West is a dumping ground

## Angry, annoyed, distressed, outraged, pissed off, ticked off

Heater filters get blocked and cost me money

Blatant breach of standards and legislation

### Health concerns

Hopeless, let down,  
misled, uninformed

Eye irritation

Concerned, worried

Toxic dust, pollution

No potable water used for dust suppression

Vindicated

### Frustrated

Francis Street yards??

Gets into house - can't open doors, windows

Scapegoats

What now!

Industry: clean up your act

Impacts on amenity

Sick of living in dirt, dust stains

Positive

### Gone on for too long... need urgent results...when?

Lots of talk, no apparent action

Interested

Victim of poor representation

# BROOKLYN COMMUNITY REFERENCE GROUP

## NOTES FROM 'SPECIAL' DUST MEETING

Date: 10 February 2010  
 Time: 6:40 for 7:00 – 8:30pm  
 Where: Brooklyn Community Centre, Cypress Avenue Brooklyn

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### AGENDA

#### Meeting Purpose:

- To provide information and findings on Dust Monitoring Program
- To provide information on future steps
- Tabling of dust-related community issues

**Chair/Facilitator:** Jen Lilburn

<b>6:40</b>	<b>Light Refreshments</b>
<b>7:00</b>	<b>1. Welcome</b> Introductions, RSVP's, BCRG Values, how the meeting will run, capturing feelings and initial questions
	<b>2. Introductory Comments</b> (Matt Vincent, Senior Manager Environment, EPA Victoria)
	<b>3. Findings from Dust Monitoring</b> (Paul Torre, Air Quality Scientist, EPA Victoria)
	<b>4. Questions re Findings</b> (Paul Torre & Matt Vincent)
	<b>5. Department of Health Advice</b> (Robert McKenzie, Environmental Health Scientist, Department of Health)
	<b>6. Questions re Health Advice</b>
	<b>7. What Will Be Done Now?</b> (Matt Vincent & Richard Marks, Manager Pollution Response, EPA Victoria)
	<b>8. General Comments and Questions</b>
<b>8:30</b>	<b>9. Close</b>

Please note that the notes from this meeting will be posted on EPA Victoria's website and will be available to the general public. Meeting participants should advise Jen Lilburn if they would like their name removed from the public notes.

## Item 1. Welcome

Jen Lilburn (Chair, BCRG) welcomed all attendees and introduced Di Barrett as the Meeting Notetaker.

Jen informed the attendees that there had been 56 RSVP's to the meeting, consisting of approx 40% residents and 'affected' local businesses, as well as representatives of Industry, City West Water, local government, EPA, Department of Health and the media.

*(Note: There were 86 participants overall who attended the meeting.)*

She outlined how the meeting would run and the opportunities that would be available for attendees to raise questions and respond to the information provided. She commented that it was important to get through the information to be provided, and that the (welcome) high number of attendees would preclude the opportunity for everyone to have their say. Nonetheless, the feelings and concerns of participants are incredibly important and have driven the need for the dust monitoring program and for this meeting.

To help to capture this, Jen invited all attendees to write on two pieces of paper:

1. How are you feeling about the dust issue and/or this meeting? (3 or so words/phrases)
2. What question/s (about dust) would you like to have answered tonight?

The responses to Q1 were placed in open view of attendees, with some read out by Jen. All responses are encapsulated in the figure at the start of this document, which shows the most frequent responses in the largest type.

In addition to the responses shown, the following comments were made by participants:

- When will the foul smells and toxic dust be stopped by the government?
- Polluting dust in the air we breathe which also infiltrates our homes continually
- Total frustration and a desire for steps to be taken immediately to counteract the problem
- Health concern for employees and self
- I feel reasonably unaffected by dust. There are several easy fixes however re sealing areas where trucks travel ie Francis Street, dust pan near cemetery etc
- I have concerns for my family's health. I am sick of dusting 4-5 times each day to no effect. I hate the stains caused by the dust
- After 30 years in South East suburbs moved to Yarraville 10 years ago. The dirt that accumulates in a short time on anything outdoors is incredible!
- Meaningful action - When??
- Use WTP Class A water from standpipe and/or organic based (citrus oil) eg dust suppression products
- I'm worried because I've heard rumours that the results of the dust monitoring show that everything's fine and within acceptable limits. I don't believe that's true. We have a real problem. Lets fix it
- I feel a meeting like this gives business an opportunity to hear community concerns 1st hand. This type of meeting is a good thing
- I feel very positive about the meeting tonight. I feel I have already seen many good things come out of these meetings
- Industry: Clean up your act this is our home/ stop polluting our neighbourhood
- Local councils (especially Maribyrnong) do nothing about street sweeping - contributes to amenity issues
- Public authorities cutting grass (dust) and leaving all over the road
- When is the EPA going to do something?
- People in high positions don't live in area don't really care enough. They still get paid.
- Industry should not expect to come into Altona, do their business and not clean up after them - they should be made to be responsible for the quality of air that's left behind

In addition, 3 people commented on the area's "foul smells".

Jen gave a commitment to follow up for a response to the questions (point 2 above); all of these questions and responses received as at the time of these minutes being completed are shown in Attachment 1. Additional responses will be circulated via an update as soon as possible..

## **Item 2. Introductory Comments**

Matt Vincent (Senior Manager Environmental Services, EPA Victoria) introduced the evening by providing context for dust monitoring. He commented that the community had raised concerns about dust and that the EPA Victoria is committed to addressing their concerns. He informed the meeting that it would be validated tonight that dust is an issue and that industry, local government and authorities are responding accordingly.

## **Items 3 & 4. Findings and questions - Dust Monitoring Program**

Paul Torre (Paul Torre, Air Quality Scientist, EPA Victoria) presented the findings of the Dust Monitoring Program.

Carmen Largaiolli (Brooklyn Residents Action Group) asked Paul to state his qualifications. He stated that he has a Bachelor of Science (Chemistry), Graduate Diploma (Analytical Chemistry) and PhD (Environmental Science).

Paul then presented the findings in a PowerPoint presentation (see [http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/air/brooklyn\\_estate.asp](http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/air/brooklyn_estate.asp) - available after 5pm 18/2/10) and then took questions from the floor:

Q: *Do you have data on dust composition?* (Cr Michael Clarke, Maribyrnong City Council).

Matt Vincent responded that composition wasn't the purpose of the monitoring program and that only levels of particles had been measured. He advised that there were not a lot of industries with emissions and that the dust appeared to be coming from 'geological sources'.

Brian Long (resident) advised that he had taken photos after dark and that due to the density of the dust it wasn't possible to see vehicles. *(These photos will shortly be available)* Marie Long expressed concerns that the dust was coming from huge piles of crushed concrete not soil.

Matt agreed and stated that the term 'geological sources' included dust originating from soil, crushed concrete, bricks, asphalt etc.

Q: *When will you know the composition of the dust?*

Matt responded that the monitoring program consisted of various stages and that the current findings are preliminary results. Rather than waiting for the program to be completed before it was communicated, EPA had felt that it was important that the community was informed about the findings at this early stage.

He said they would need to think through composition and how it would be surveyed. Matt highlighted that the elevated levels of dust were during periods when the weather was hot and the wind was blowing from the north or north-west.

Q: *Is TEOM PM2 applicable? Are you looking at that and, if not, why not?*

The TEOM PM2.5 monitoring was not employed because the general approach to assessing air quality impact from wind blown dust from ground or geological origin is to measure PM10 particles. PM10 particles typically make up the greatest proportion of the dust from nearby sources. The PM2.5 component is included in the total PM10 measurement however, it is not measured separately.

Q: *What inversion is there at night?*

Inversions generally occur during the night and continue to the morning, they typically extend over a large area over many suburbs. During severe inversions air pollution levels become elevated due to the still atmosphere and very low winds trapping air pollutants and preventing them from being dispersed and diluted.

Community members expressed frustration that these issues had been going on for so long and that after four years they still didn't have resolution. Matt reiterated that industry, local government and authorities are committed to addressing the dust issue. He advised that it is the wind blowing from the industry estates (north / north-west direction) that is bringing the dust. Paul confirmed that the dust is from geological sources, not combustion.

Q: *Is the dust brought by wind or generated by industry trucks? How do the monitoring stations operate in relation to wind? Are the particles being measured for size and composition?*

Bruce Dawson (Director Environmental Science, EPA Victoria) gave an immediate commitment that the EPA would determine and communicate the dust composition as soon as this information is available.

Q: *Have planning permits been put on hold and, if not, why not?*

(This question was put 'on hold' until later in the meeting.)

Annette Patrick (resident) observed that there had been a lack of strong winds during the monitoring period and wondered if the findings would have been different if there had been more strong winds. Matt told the meeting that the EPA can accept that when the weather is hot these results are the outcome. Annette responded that she doubted the temperature impacts on dust.

Q: *Do you know what is in the landfill contributing to the dust?*

Bruce Dawson, (Director, Environment Services, EPA Victoria) reaffirmed that the EPA work quickly to determine dust composition. He reiterated that the monitoring program findings handed down this evening are only preliminary results.

Gilbert Martin (Brooklyn Ratepayers Committee) informed the meeting that these issues had been around since the late 1970's and that there was now the need for stronger action on behalf of the community. Bruce confirmed that he had heard and noted this advice.

## **Item 5. Department of Health Advice**

Robert McKenzie (Environmental Health Scientist, Department of Health) presented to the meeting on the impacts of dust particles on health (see **Attachment 2**). He confirmed that concerns about health issues in the area were now validated by the Department of Health. Robert was asked to state his qualifications prior to the presentation. He stated that he is a Registered Nurse and has a Bachelor of Science (Chemistry) and Masters in Applied Science (Toxicology).

## **Item 6. Questions on Health Advice**

Q: *Your advice is aimed at children, the aged, and people with pre-existing conditions. How are the healthy to be affected?*

Robert clarified that his advice was for the particularly vulnerable in the community to take extra precautions as outlined in his presentation. In most cases healthy people can throw off the affects in time. However, the ability to do this will be reduced in environments where there is constant or frequent exposure to dust.

Jamie Atkinson (resident) responded that since moving to the area he had noticed a distinct decrease in his health and physical stamina.

Q: *Should we expect a difference in our health given this different environment?*

Robert reiterated that the Department of Health can validate the impacts that dust will have on health wellbeing and/or breathing.

Kylie Hutchison (resident) asked that, given the data, could health advice specific for the Brooklyn/Yarraville area be given (rather than more general advice on the impacts of dust)? *(note by Jen: this question will be added to those listed in Attachment 1)*

Q: *Will the number of days when the levels of PM10 matter is above the air quality objective of 50micrograms/m<sup>3</sup> result in an increase in mortality rates?*

Robert advised that people with pre-existing conditions are susceptible. -The World Health Organisation (WHO) data referred to is considered in setting the particulate matter air quality standard and our standard is consistent with that recommended by the WHO. We cannot say whether or not the breaches of the air quality standards have increased the mortality rate in Brooklyn.

Q: *What are the mortality rates? Has there been an increase in level?*

No study has been done on mortality rates in this area.

Q: *Will advice be given to the local school on days when dust levels are high?*

Yes.

Q: *How much pull have you got with Victorian Government to have legislation changed to remove offending sites?*

Robert advised that the Department of Health provides advice to the EPA on health issues.

Q: *Has a comparison been done on asthmatic children in this area with those in other areas?*

There is no comparison data but other areas also have issues.

Q: *Can a comparison study be done on people affected in this area with other areas?*

There are no plans at this stage to conduct a comparison study.

At this point George Smetona (resident) expressed an appreciation to those present and thanked them for their attendance.

## **Item 7. What will be done now?**

Matt Vincent and Richard Marks (Manager Pollution Response, EPA Victoria) addressed the meeting to discuss the next steps (see [http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/air/brooklyn\\_estate.asp](http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/air/brooklyn_estate.asp) after 5pm 18/2/2010). Richard has a Bachelor (Engineering) and Bachelor (Science).

The meeting was informed that the EPA's observations are that the particles are dust/dirt. They are from:

- vehicle movement;
- crushing;
- stockpiled material; and
- landfills.

Richard advised that a Government Working Group had been formed to address these observations. He notified the meeting that the following actions have been taken:

- 53 sites have been notified of the data;
- 15 Notices to Identify have been issued to occupiers; and
- a Pollution Abatement Notice has been drafted.

The EPA has given notice to industry that things have to change and that visits by the EPA and Councils are imminent. They will continue to follow up with industry and expect a quick response.

Chris Xhayeteux (Client Relationship Manager, EPA Victoria) informed the meeting that guidelines based on International and National best control measures are currently being drafted. They will be presented to industry to assist in their efforts to control dust.

*(Note by Jen: following the meeting Matt Vincent clarified that this information may be provided as guidance and not necessarily as formal guidelines)*

Geoff Mitchelmore (resident) urged that offending industry should be prosecuted.

John Merritt (CEO, EPA Victoria) addressed the meeting and gave an immediate commitment to provide leadership to EPA to take action on offending industries. He reiterated his commitment to support those in EPA for change.

Brian Long (resident) said it shouldn't be about the community changing lifestyle but about industry changing work practices.

Q: *Why not monitor on boundaries of industries? Why are they allowed to operate? Why has Brimbank Council not taken action on these industries?*

Matt Vincent referred to recent meetings between BCRG and the most senior of levels at Brimbank City Council. Bruce Light (President, Yarraville On The Nose Community Group) agreed that there had been a strong commitment from Council to fix the issues in the Brooklyn Industrial Estate. *(note by Jen: see BCRG-Brimbank meeting notes circulated on 11 February)*

At this point community representatives commended Matt Vincent (EPA) for this evening's proceedings

Community representatives expressed deep concern about the delay in fixing the issues and urged that Government and Council need to do something now. In response Michael Clarke commented that BCRG is a collaborative effort by community, industry, government and council and is resulting in systematic change. Michael encouraged industry representatives to talk about what they were doing to address dust issues.

Jen called on members of industry to convey what actions their companies had taken to address the issues concerning the community.

- ▶ Christian Buxton (Recovery & Recycling Industries) told the meeting that his company had organised and was prepared to pay for the sealing of a road into their property. The job was booked and due for commencement when they received a call from Brimbank Council telling them that the road was under the Council's jurisdiction and that their company couldn't proceed with the sealing.

Jen committed to discussing this matter with Brimbank City Council.

*The following is a summary of the response received from Brimbank CC after the meeting:*

*Council officers were acting proactively and in the interests of Council, the traveling public that would be affected by the proposed works AND the proponent of the works by trying to gain a greater understanding of what was proposed including the standards proposed.*

*As stated to BCRG on 3 December 2008, Bunting Road is shown on Council's register of roads. Council officers would unlikely be averse to the sealing of the road. The reason there was no clear affirmation of the works is that there no detail provided about such things as: -*

- the actual works proposed,
- the traffic management measures to be undertaken, and
- who was to take on the on-going responsibility for maintenance of the seal?

As an aside, Council officers would not be in favour of the installation of speed humps. The reason for this is that speed humps are not employed in industrial areas. If speed attenuation is required other devices such as "speed cushions" are more suitable as there is less likelihood of jarring of tracks and consequently less chance of injury to truck drivers.

Council officers have advised the proponent of the works that they would be willing to discuss and provide further guidance.

- ▶ Greg Hughes (Sims Metal Management) informed the meeting that the EPA has certainly been very present and is pushing industry to control dust problems. Actions undertaken by his company this financial year include:
  - hook extensions to boundary fences preventing dust and dirt from blowing over the fence; and
  - concreting an area of their yard, resulting in 85% of the yard now sealed.

Due to lack of time, Jen asked for the remaining initiatives to be provided for inclusion in these notes. These were not received by the time these notes were completed, and will be provided via an update to Attachment 3.

*Note by Jen: following the meeting, industry representatives were asked by email to detail initiatives that they were undertaking to minimise dust. Responses were received from Sunshine Groupe (Recovery and Recycling Industries) and TPI (TWM Landfills) and are shown in **Attachment 3**. Additional responses will be provided via an update.*

Gilbert Martin raised the issue of odour. While it was recognised that odour is one of the air quality issues, the meeting was reminded that tonight's agenda was on 'dust'.

Q: *Why are planning permits still being issued by Brimbank Council eg Melbourne Wholesale Fish Market? (Question previously 'on hold'.)*

Leigh Harrison (GM Engineering & Operation Services, Brimbank City Council) advised that the Fish Markets proposal was one of 'best practice' and there was no legal reason why a planning permit shouldn't be issued. However, he stated that most of the issues in the Brimbank Industrial Estate are not caused by industries with permits, but rather by those which have long-standing 'existing use rights'. Local government has no power to override these rights, which are encapsulated in State legislation.

Q: *What about the asphalt/concrete plant currently before VCAT?*

Leigh responded that certain industries are allowed under State zones. Bruce Dawson told the meeting that the EPA always considers the impacts on the environment when considering a permit application

John (resident) told the meeting that residents along Geelong Road are subject to dust when Vic Roads mows the median strip due to the proximity of mower blades to the dusty ground.

*(Action 4.10: Chris Xhayeteux to follow up with Vic Roads on this matter.)*



## Other Matters

Brian Long (resident) read from Australian Tallow's letter dated 18 January 2010 in which notice was given of work on the design and construction of a biogas recovery lagoon. He said that this letter had not been communicated through BCRG, nor had it been adequately distributed. This was confirmed by other community representatives present.

Kate McAuliffe (Environmental Co-ordinator, Australian Tallow Producers) was invited to address the meeting on the project. She advised that the construction of a fully covered lagoon will result in:

- Processing of waste water on site.
- High strength waste water with a lot of organic material.
- No source of odour (removed through process).
- All the gases are captured under the cover.

Kate agreed that she would need to ensure that her mail distribution company would need to be contacted.

*Note by Jen: the information was distributed to BCRG email list on 11 February).*

Q: *What is the timeline for more acceptable dust levels?*

Matt Vincent told the meeting that cooler weather will lessen the risk of unacceptable dust levels. As well, the risk will be reduced through the actions taken by EPA and he expects that similar talks will not be necessary this time next year.

Additional questions received after the meeting are shown in **Attachment 1**; those not answered to date will be followed up and reported back to the group as soon as possible.

It is noted that verbal and written comments requested use of a PA system in future meetings.

Jen thanked everyone for their open and respectful participation over the course of the evening.

Meeting closed at 9pm.

Notes taken and written by Di Barrett and reviewed by Jennifer Lilburn.

Next BCRG Meeting scheduled 19 May 2010

## Attendees who registered at the desk:

Adrian Masterman-Smith	Resident Altona North	Jamie Atkinson	Yarraville resident
Alesha Capone	Star Newspapers	Jan Cole	Resident
Anne Palmer	Hobsons Bay Residents Association	Janine Gillett	Resident
Annette Patrick	BRAG	John Merritt	EPA Victoria
Bert Boere	BRAG	John Styzinski	Brooklyn Resident
Bill Cole	Resident	Karen Nolan	On The Nose
Brian Long	BRAG	Kate McAuliffe	Australian Tallow Producers
Bruce Dawson	EPA Victoria	Kerry Murphy	EPA Victoria
Bruce Light	On The Nose	Kevin Annia	Swift Australia
Chris Papa	Hobsons Bay City Council	Kylie Hutchison	Yarraville resident
Carey Patterson	Brimbank City Council	Laurie Bell	BRAG/Brooklyn Ratepayers Committee
Carmen Largaiolli	BRAG	Leigh Harrison	Brimbank City Council
Charlene Gatt	Star News Group	Lowen Clarke	Resident
Charlie Volpe	BRAG	Marc Hewitt	Sims Metal Management
Chris Xhayeteux	EPA Victoria	Marie Long	BRAG
Christian Buxton	Recovery & Recycling Industries	Mark Globan	Sita
Colin Palmer	Hobsons Bay Residents Association	Martin Hermans	Yarraville resident
Craig West	Yarraville Resident	Matt Vincent	EPA Victoria
Di Barrett	Meeting Notetaker	Melissa Campbell	Yarraville resident
Debbi Woods	Friends of Kororoit Creek	Michael Clarke (Cr)	Maribyrnong City Council
Don Wilson	Brooklyn Resident	Michael Raffoul (Cr)	Hobsons Bay City Council
Foti Beratis	Maribyrnong City Council	Mike Jenkins	Resident
Gary Hobbs	Hanson Construction Materials	Noel Ryan	Huntsman Chemical Co
Geoff Griffin	Yarraville resident	Pam Wombwell	Resident
Geoff Mitchelmore	Altona North Resident	Paul Torre	EPA Victoria
George Smetona	Altona North Resident	Richard Marks	EPA Victoria
Gilbert Martin	Brooklyn Ratepayers Committee	Robert McKenzie	Department of Health
Greg Hughes	Sims Metal Management	Rohan Barron	City West Water
Heather Humphreys	Brooklyn Resident	Sue O'Halloran	CMI Forge
Herb Horrell	Brimbank City Council	Tim Masters	City Circle Demolitions
James Downe	Sita	Tony Briffa (Cr)	Hobsons Bay City Council
James Fraser	On The Nose	Troy White	Swift Australia
James Twining	Leader Newspapers	Tu	Resident

Apologies	
Alf Mena	Resident
Cath Williams	Yooralla
Ken Deutscher	Huntsman Performance Products
Linda Trewern	Resident
Nadia Verga	TWM Landfills
Nick Morgan	Cargill
Richard Wheeler	TWM Landfills