



BCRG COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE SESSION SUMMARY

WEDNESDAY

7 MARCH, 2018

5:00pm – 7.00pm

Brooklyn Community Centre, Cypress Avenue, Brooklyn



PURPOSE

To provide an opportunity for the community to speak one-on-one with representatives from EPA, state government, Councils, and industry about their efforts to improve Brooklyn's air quality.

The intent of these notes is to promote open communication between local business, local and state government, community and EPA Victoria (EPA). They are not to be used in a manner that compromises this objective.

Notes from this event will be posted on the Brooklyn Industrial Precinct website and will be available to the public.

BACKGROUND

The Brooklyn Community Representative Group Community forum (BCRG) is an opportunity for members of the community, industry, local and state government to discuss issues about the air quality of the general Brooklyn area. It also enables the communication of plans and progress by individual industries, local government and EPA. BCRG has been operating as an open forum since 2008 in a standard meeting format where representatives from community, Council, industry and government agencies are invited to present updates and respond to questions.

Three meetings per year are held on a Wednesday at 6.30pm – 8.30pm and are independently facilitated. In 2017 we ran Brooklyn Community Representative Group's first Open House session. 86 people attended, 36% of whom were new to BCRG. Participants enjoyed the opportunity to talk directly with industries and government agencies.

THE OPEN HOUSE SESSION

Following the success of the 2017 event it was decided to run another Open House on 7 March 2018 at the Brooklyn Community Hall in Cypress Avenue, Brooklyn. In response to feedback from 2017, the event was held from 5–7pm (slightly shorter than 2017 but still earlier than the normal BCRG forum timeslot of 6-8pm) so as to attract a new cohort of residents.

Representatives from agencies, councils and industries brought information and display material. Individual members of the community were able to approach them one to one and ask questions. It was a great opportunity to build community relations and talk about achievements and issues related to reducing odour, dust and/or noise in the Brooklyn area.



Sixteen organisations set up displays and were available for the community to approach directly. EPA Victoria also conducted two tours of the air monitoring station in the nearby Brooklyn Reserve throughout the evening. A maximum of four people could attend each tour.

More images can be seen on the Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/BrooklynCommunityRepresentativeGroup>

ORGANISATIONS ON DISPLAY

NAME	ORGANISATION TYPE
Brooklyn Community Representative Group	Community Forum
Brooklyn Community Action Group	Community Advocacy Group
EPA Victoria	State Government Agency
EPA Victoria, Metro	State Government Agency
EPA Victoria Air Monitoring Station Tours	State Government Agency
Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Group	State Government Agency
Sustainability Victoria	State Government Agency
VicRoads	State Government Agency
West Gate Tunnel Project	State Government Agency
Transurban	Private Company
Brimbank City Council	Local Government
Hobsons Bay City Council	Local Government
Maribyrnong City Council	Local Government
Containerspace	Local Industry
City Circle	Local Industry
Cedar Meats	Local Industry
Sims Metal	Local Industry
Sunshine Groupe	Local Industry
JBS Australia	Local Industry

Several other organisations were invited but were either reluctant to display, unable to attend or didn't respond.

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PROMOTION OF THE SESSION

Promotion of the Open House event was increased (from the normal notice of BCRG meeting) to ensure a new audience was reached but kept to a low budget approach. This included:

- The BCRG e-news promoted the new forum nine times from January to its 270 members with an open rate of 31%.
- An **A4 flyer** was available for download and distribution from the enews and website.
- Information about the event was available on the www.brooklynip.com.au website, Brimbank CC events, Hobsons Bay CC community events and the Star Weekly website community events page.
- 1500 leaflets were delivered to the residential area of Brooklyn – particularly west of Millers Rd, south of Geelong Rd and north of the Westgate Freeway in the weeks prior.
- EPA Victoria issued a **Media Release** about the event on 2 March 2018.
- The Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/BrooklynCommunityRepresentativeGroup/> is still relatively small with 161 followers. Promotion included 4 posts and a specific 'event'.
- The Brimbank and Hobson Bay council communications teams liked the event through their social media channels.
- Wade Noonan MP, City of Maribyrnong, Brimbank City Council, EPA Victoria, Sims Metal Management, Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Group, Sustainability Victoria, JBS/Swift, City Circle Group, Containerspace, West Gate Tunnel Project, Friends of Lower Kororoit Creek, Annunciation Primary School and Yarraville Community Centre were 'tagged' in the event photo with only one 'share'. [NB: many organisations have a policy that prevents 'sharing' of outside posts.]

An informal poll of attendees asked how they heard about the event. The majority of the residents and community who haven't participated in BCRG before said they were responding to the letterbox-dropped flyer (10), word of mouth (2) and through Facebook (2).

Regular BCRG community attendees mostly heard about the event through the enews.

ATTENDANCE

There were 69 attendees recorded: 27 residents/community, 14 industry, and 28 others including council and agency staff. Of the residents, 13 were new to BCRG. As it did last year, the change in timing allowed some people to attend who couldn't normally.

Apologies were received from the Office of Hon Wade Noonan MP and Cargill.



Jen Lilburn with some community members.

AIR MONITORING STATION TOURS

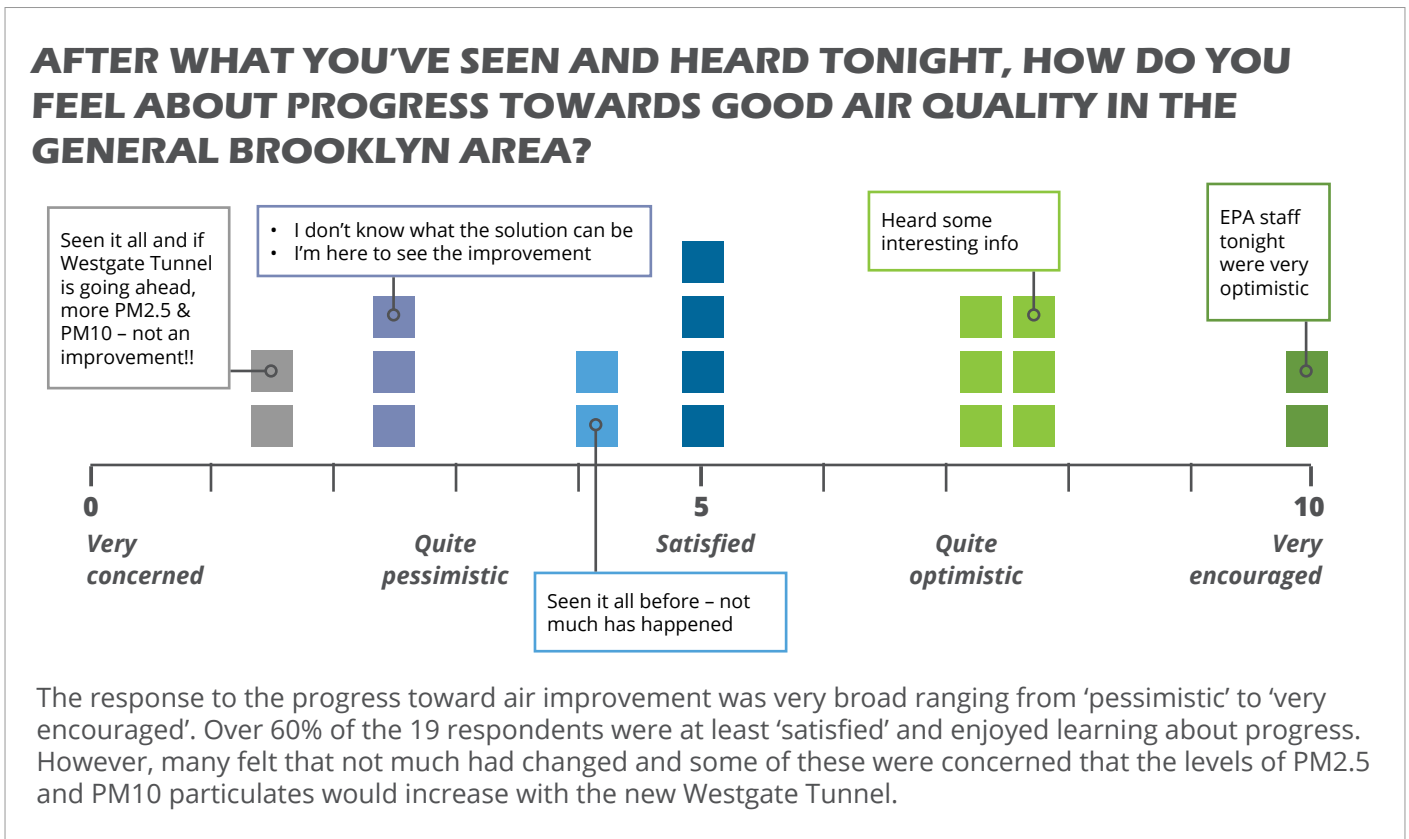
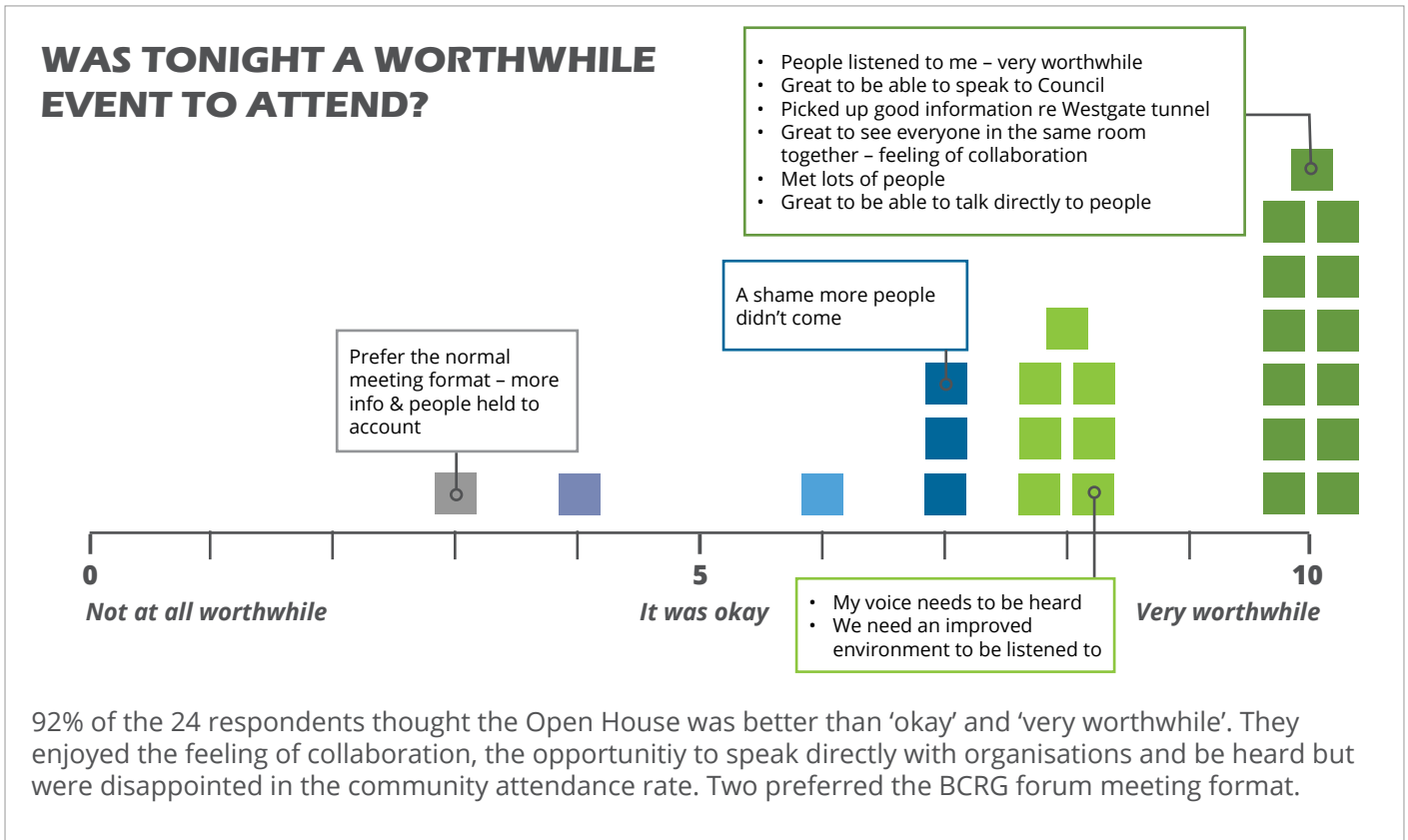
Four people took advantage of the tours of the Air Monitoring Station in Brooklyn Reserve conducted by scientists from the Air Quality team at EPA Victoria.



Brimbank Councillors Sam David and Kim Thien Truong with Paul Torre

FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

Jen Lilburn, (BCRG Convenor) asked attendees as they left the event to answer two questions. These were designed to gauge participant reaction to the Open House event and if they thought there had been progress made in Brooklyn regarding air quality.



FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

Following the event an online survey of the organisations that had displays at the event was conducted. There were 11 responses received.

WAS YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE BCRG DROP-IN SESSION WORTHWHILE? (PLEASE EXPLAIN)

Ten respondents said that they thought the event was worthwhile and that there was a 'positive vibe'. It had provided a great opportunity for interaction and discussion between community, agencies and industry.

The event was also an opportunity to provide background information on the history of the area and what has been implemented. There was some concern that the community were more focussed on issues related to the Westgate tunnel and EPA than industry. EPA staff noted that there were a lot of visitors to the 'odour booth', which was a new opportunity at this year's event.

'All our staff who attended thought the Open House format works well because it is more casual and allows the public to have one on one contact and question time with various experts or agencies very relevant to their lives.'

'The open house provided an opportunity to hear community views on waste and resource recovery in the precinct. It also provided an opportunity to hear from councils and other state government bodies about their work in the area and directions for the future.'

WHAT WERE THE MAIN THEMES THAT PEOPLE WANTED TO DISCUSS?

- Dust, odour, noise, fires
- Progress, BCRG moving forward
- Compliance, and what EPA is doing when businesses breach their responsibilities.
- Council staff wanted to talk to EPA about dog parks.
- People had a few questions about our plant and what we do on site. It was nice to be able to explain rather than have people assume without the facts
- Topics that related to the West Gate Tunnel Project. Themes included air quality, safety and accessibility, traffic and transport
- Future of industry in the area, amenity impacts
- People wanted to know who we were and what exactly we do. We received a lot of positive feedback which is always great to hear.



Testing for odour at the EPA odour booth

HOW COULD WE IMPROVE THE DROP-IN SESSION FORMAT?

Seven respondents made suggestions:

- *Budget for advertising the session in local papers.*
- *More promotion or finding ways to attract a larger audience. Some people commented to EPA staff on the day that it seems there's two types of Brooklyn community member: those who are older, lived there longer and less interested over the years in the issues. And also newer, younger residents - and how it would be great to tap into them for BCRG membership. They suggested recruiting and promoting events via Facebook, including Brooklyn community groups online.*
- *I think it is pretty good as is. Maybe a bit more signage.*
- *I think it was well run, as it was my first I am not sure how the attendance figures stacked up against previous drop-ins*
- *Perhaps more break out areas for more detailed discussions or for those who cannot stand for extended periods or children*
- *As this was our first event I didn't really have anything to compare it to. I could only suggest trying to get other businesses on board as it appears its always the same ones.*



ANY OTHER COMMENTS?

Respondents were grateful for the opportunity to participate in this event and thought the shorter two-hour window was perfect. Promotion more broadly of future events was seen as important. The range of organisations that attended was seen as important to address the varied concerns expressed by community members and their wish for best practice and enforcement where necessary.

One respondent noted that there seems to be confusion in the community between the Brooklyn Residents Action Group (BRAG) and the Brooklyn Community Representative Group (BCRG) and their respective roles.

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LESSONS LEARNT/SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- Two-hour format was successful.
- Keep and improve if possible the range of organisations that display at the event.
- Could provide more seats for one-to-one discussions – although space is limited.
- 1500 flyers were required for the immediate residential area.
- Review promotion and if advertising in local papers is required in future – requires a budget.
- A concerted effort to raise social media interactions.
- Provision of refreshments throughout the event was important.

Report prepared by Andrea Mason, Executive Officer, BCRG

