

# Brooklyn Community Representative Group – A Potted History

Compiled by Andrea Mason from BCRG meeting notes Nov 2024



## BCRG Background

### 2000

From as early as 2000 the Brooklyn community called for a forum that would give it a voice and expose the long-term problems of odour, noise and dust and their impacts on the health and amenity of residents and employees.

### 2007

BCRG was at last set up as a short-term community reference group in 2007 to bring together the parties who have an interest in the air quality issues emanating from the Brooklyn Industrial Precinct.

For the first year meetings were rotated across the three Councils, with Councillors from the 'host' municipality chairing the meetings.

### 2008

In August 2008 an open community forum was held to determine the scope and scale of community concerns. The forum involved 89 participants and was professionally facilitated. It resulted in a detailed report confirming issues and concerns.

Shortly after this the forum's facilitator Jen Lilburn, was asked to independently chair BCRG meetings on an ongoing basis, and the Brooklyn Community Hall became its permanent 'home'.



# BCRG is Born!

2008

As BCRG provided the only opportunity for community and industry people to discuss issues and learn about progress, interest in attending meetings began to grow.



EPA Victoria covers the costs of the independent, professional convenor (chair).

BCRG is supported by the municipalities of Brimbank, Hobsons Bay and Maribyrnong, which share costs of Executive Officer, forum costs and administration.

◆ **Has no decision-making authority. It is:**

An open forum which enables issues relating to odour, noise and dust in the general Brooklyn area to be discussed by community, industry, local and state government.

An opportunity for individual industries, EPA Victoria and local government to report on plans and progress towards the achievement of clean air.

**The Community Forum is complemented by two strategic groups led by Brimbank City Council:**

◆ The **Brooklyn Industrial Precinct Strategy Committee** provides advice and recommendations to Brimbank City Council, identifying priorities, establishing strategies and plans, managing communications and coordinating the delivery of programs aimed at improving the amenity of the precinct and its long term planning, design and development.

Membership is made up of council staff, government agencies, the EPA plus three community nominated representatives and three industry nominated representatives.

◆ The **Brooklyn Interagency Strategic Partnership Group** provides high level leadership to ensure that there is effective and integrated government commitment to improving the amenity of Brooklyn and of residents surrounding the precinct and to ensure that long term opportunities for the precinct are realised.

# Commitments to Brooklyn



## 2009

- (EPA Victoria) committed action, support and leadership to addressing Brooklyn's problems
- Mayors of Brimbank, Maribyrnong and Hobsons Bay attended BCRG and committed action
- Sims Metal Management committed to broadband reversing beepers on all forklifts operating at night
- Governance change at Brimbank City Council resulted in greater focus and priority to Brooklyn

## 2010

**Dept Health validated health concerns** regarding dust

### **Compliance Strengthened**

- Pollution Abatement Notices re dust were issued to 6 companies—many more to follow over time
- Brimbank CC reviewed planning permits and compliance inspections. 3 businesses contributing to dust left the area
- First blitz on industry compliance involving EPA, Vic Pol, Sherriff, Vic Roads, Work Safe, Brimbank CC
- SITA Organics Recycling moved out of Brooklyn
- Australian Tallow begins process to upgrade factory extraction and improve biofilters
- Swift fined for discharge of effluent

**Dedicated Executive Officer appointed** – across 3 levels of consultation!



# Action begins

2011



## Brooklynip website launched

### Industry under scrutiny

- Charges laid against Australian Tallow
- Cargill enters an Enforceable Undertaking and later agrees to \$600,000 upgrades to fix odour issues and \$50,000 to community street tree project
- Transpacific Market Road landfill closed
- Tasman Logistics sealed container yard

### Roads in the Spotlight

- VicRoads repairs verges in Francis Street (a major dust contributor)
- Hobsons Bay CC undertakes kerb and channel works and install wire barriers on Cemetery Rd and Francis St to reduce dust
- Brimbank CC completes drainage works in Jones and Bunting Roads to reduce dust.

Award-winning **Brooklyn Evolution Strategy** developed by Brimbank CC to provide long-term strategy to improve (among other things) amenity and environmental outcomes.



# Commitments to BCRG

2011



Our Ref: MA005182

Ms Jennifer Lilburn  
Convenor, Brooklyn Community Reference Group &  
Director Kismet Forward  
PO Box 8001  
RIPPLESIDE VIC 3215

Dear Ms Lilburn

**Brooklyn Community Reference Group – Community Forum**

Thank you for your letter and for the great work you are doing to keep the BCRG contemporary with community needs.

EPA willingly supports the updating of the statement to:

**We will continue to work together and with you to ensure that the community's concerns and aspirations regarding odour, noise and dust in the general Brooklyn area are reflected in the actions we take. We will provide feedback on how BCRG input informs our decisions.**

EPA greatly values being a part of the BCRG and consider it to be a very valuable process for helping the community to input into the environmental protection needs of the area.

Yours sincerely

JOHN MERRITT  
/E OFFICER

5/6/2011



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On 3 May 2011, Brimbank City Council  
(at its Planning Committee Meeting No. 24)  
passed the following resolution:

Brimbank City Council will continue to work together with the Brimbank Community Reference Group (BCRG) to ensure the community's concerns and aspirations regarding odour, noise and dust in the general Brooklyn area are reflected in the action it takes.

Brimbank City Council will provide feedback on how BCRG input informs its decisions.

# Commitments to BCRG



## The Council's commitment



On Tuesday, 9th July 2013, Hobsons Bay City Council passed the following resolution:

*The Council confirms its commitment to working with the Brooklyn Community Representative Group (BCRG) by ensuring aspirations regarding odour, noise and dust in the general Brooklyn area are reflected in the actions it takes.*

[www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au](http://www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au)



On 16 August 2011, Maribyrnong City Council (at its Ordinary Council Meeting) passed the following resolution:

That Council endorse:

1. Maribyrnong City Council's participation in the Brooklyn Community Reference Group Community Forum, the Brooklyn Interagency Strategic Agency Group and the proposed Brooklyn Precinct Planning Working Group.
2. The following commitment to the Brooklyn Community Reference Group Community Forum:

We will work together to ensure that your concerns and aspirations, and those of the broader community, regarding odour, noise and dust in the general Brooklyn area are reflected in the actions we take. We will provide feedback on how BCRG input influences our decisions.

# Community Action and Partnerships

2012



## Federation Trail Project

### Brooklyn Residents Action Group Inc (BRAG)

**Stage 1** - a public park and green space between Millers Road and Geelong Road

- Funded through the Courts by a \$50,000 grant to BRAG in 2012. 10,000 indigenous trees, shrubs and ground covers were planted. The installation of entry fencing and garden and a water drinking fountain along with community participation at a celebratory event at the end of the planting program added to the success of the project.
- An additional \$85,000 was contributed to the project through in kind support by Hobsons Bay City Council, Melbourne Water, VicRoads, Transpacific, Sunshine Groupe and the office of Wade Noonan MP.

**Stage 2** - between Geelong Road and Kororoit Creek commenced in 2013

- Support from VicRoads, Melbourne Water, Brimbank City Council, EPA Victoria, Transpacific Industries, Delta Demolitions Group, Burns Earthmoving, Sunshine Groupe, Toyota Australia, APA Group, Australian Tallow, Cedar Meats Australia, Cargill Australia, Fulton Hogan, JBS Australia , Marks Henderson, Sims Metal Management, Veolia Environmental Services, Friends of Lower Kororoit Creek.



# What Has BCRG Achieved?



2012

## **Bringing the community together:**

BCRG has given the community a voice to communicate the scale and impacts of dust, odour and noise, and has provided a forum for communication progress.

BCRG has complemented the advocacy role of YOTN and BRAG, which represent members residing in Yarraville and Brooklyn respectively.

## **Bringing the decision makers together:**

All parties who can fix the issues are together in the one room. The need for change has been driven by the fact that government is able to see first-hand the level of anger and frustration in the community.

## **Getting attention and focus:**

Continues advocacy BCRG (and BRAG and YOTN) led to the dust monitoring program, which confirmed the magnitude and severity of the dust problem. This has led to increased resources directed towards compliance and enforcement.

However, there remains frustration that progress has been too slow. There is optimism in the community that the right processes are in place to achieve a much anticipated, sustainable change in the short to medium term.

BRAG and YOTN members appreciate that the environmental problems in the area are enormous and cannot be fixed overnight. However, they stress that residents and employees within Yarraville and Brooklyn demand the same air quality that is enjoyed by the rest of Melbourne.



## BCRG Goal

2012 - 2013



BCRG shares the vision of the 2012 Brooklyn Evolution Strategy, which was produced by Brimbank City Council in consultation with the community and industry:

*Over the next 20 years, the Brooklyn Industrial Precinct will evolve into a key employment node for Melbourne's west, a destination of choice for new, 'clean and green' investment and development.*

**It is within this context that the BCRG goal was developed in 2013:**

Brooklyn Industrial Precinct **industries are considered a valuable part of the local community**. They operate to **modern-day standards, comply** with all regulations, and actively contribute to the **best possible amenity for people** who live, work and recreate in the area.

## 2014

**Stockpile Working Group (SWG)** was created specifically to draft a letter from BCRG to the Planning Minister which could be used to highlight the impact of dust stockpiles on community health in the region.



# Significant Funding for Roads

2015



## \$2.6M partnership for the sealing of Jones Rd and Bunting Rd.

Lindsay Wilson-Roberts, Electorate Officer for Wade Noonan MP, Member for Williamstown District gave an update on the recently announced \$2.6M partnership between the Victorian Government and Brimbank City Council for the sealing of Jones Rd and Bunting Rd in Brooklyn. Lindsay acknowledged the importance of the work by Wade and the community in securing the funding and is confident that this will significantly reduce the impact of dust in Brooklyn. He stressed that although sealing Jones and Bunting Roads would not resolve all the pollution issues for the area it is a significant step forward



There was applause all round for the completion of the sealing of Jones and Bunting Roads. Brimbank CC **applauded the efforts of the community volunteers** who have been the champions for change and provided the impetus and direction for all levels of government and agencies to contribute financially to this project. **Certificates of Recognition** which were awarded to Geoff Mitchelmore for Friends of Kororoit Creek, Bert Boere for Brooklyn Residents Action Group and Bruce Light for Yarraville On the Nose.



From this to



to this



Old Geelong Rd has 260 new bollards. Brimbank Council surveyors begin designing the kerbing, channels and landscaping.



# Targeting Industry

2015



The City Circle site operates within the scope and conditions of a formal **Site Environmental Management Plan (SEMP)**

In an attempt to minimise City Circle's impact on the Brooklyn community the following works have been undertaken:

- Environmental Manager – new position to monitor dust and mud management
- Sealing of Entrance Road
- Upgrade of Wheel Washing system including sealing the road either side
- Additional Wheel Wash added



Australian Tallow Producers Pty Ltd (ATP) found guilty of three counts of air pollution offences resulting in Hobsons Bay City Council being awarded \$200,000 for the upgrade to Brooklyn Reserve - Destination Play Space and Recreation Zone. Council committed an additional \$200,000 towards the works.

EPA introduces the **Mobile particle monitoring device** being used in Brooklyn to measure dust levels.



## Some Successes

2016



**Bruce Light, Yarraville On The Nose, commented on the reduction of odour that has occurred in the past 10 years thanks to the work of industries such as Cargill and the BCRG forum.**

### **Brooklyn Roads Improvements**

- Jones Road planting
- Old Geelong Road construction
- Old Geelong Road swale
- The widening and sealing of the northern section of Old Geelong Road referred for consideration in Council's 10 Year Capital Works Program

### **Amendment C177 Brooklyn Industrial and Commercial Precinct**

Brimbank CC considered Amendment C177 which proposes to:

- Amend Clause 21.09 Industrial Land Use of the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS)
- Apply the Design and Development Overlay (DD011) to all land in the Brooklyn Industrial Precinct
- Rezone land along part of the Geelong Road, Brooklyn frontage from Industrial 1 to the Commercial 2 Zone

**Sunshine Groupe Site Improvements** - In order to minimise dust creation and the transfer of sediment offsite, Sunshine Groupe has spent almost \$800,000 on dust control measures including spray systems, covers at transfer points and conveyors plus site management systems using truck showers, water truck and dust monitors. Since Jones and Bunting Roads were sealed there have been more significant works undertaken including sealing the entrance, internal roads, tipping points, creating spoon drains, building a new tipping shed, street sweeping and a water bath totalling over \$1.1M.



# Community Input Opportunities

2016 - 2017



**Hon Wade Noonan MP (Member for Williamstown) and Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP (Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change and Minister for Suburban Development)** at the BCRG meeting to hear concerns from the community regarding Brooklyn.

Three members of the community provided first-hand accounts of the continued impacts from noise, dust and odour were having on those who live and work in the Brooklyn area.



**March 2017 first of the Open house sessions**

**Tim Watts MP, Member for Gellibrand and Nial Finegan, CEO EPA Victoria at the BCRG meeting to hear concerns from the community regarding Brooklyn.**

The EPA Inquiry report with the Minister. There were 48 recommendations made including legislating for a 'general duties preventative model'



# WGT and Air Quality

2018 - 2019



## **West Gate Tunnel Project, Western Distributor Authority**

Of interest to BCRG were issues related to air quality, construction and noise impacts on residents, ongoing traffic issues, Federation Trail disruptions and changes to Millers Rd.

**Air Quality** – There are **five air quality monitoring stations** in place and the site for sixth air quality monitoring station has been agreed (Millers Rd), in line with EPA requirements

There are **Community Liaison Groups** - CLG West and CLG North. Members were chosen following a public process.

**Jen Lilburn left March 2018 at the Open House**

**Cath Botta began as independent facilitator**

**Inner West Air Quality Community Reference Group**

The **VicRoads Millers Road & Williamstown Road corridor study working group** is looking at access for local residents, safety and increased freight movement after the West Gate Tunnel Project.



2020 - 2021

Last Open House



**Community representation on the Brooklyn Industrial Precinct Strategy Committee (BIPSC) removed.**

**Victorian Recycling Infrastructure Plan (VRIP)** and its four main goals: reduce our reliance on landfills; encourage resource recovery and recycling through the consolidation and aggregation of our waste; raise the standard of waste and resource recovery facilities by improving their performance and improve the evidence base for decisions making at all levels of government, industry and the community. Brooklyn is one of the 22 Hubs in the plan and its key role as it is reprocessing significant metal and materials form the construction and demolition sector. ,

**Inner West Air Quality Report (Patsy Toop, Independent Chair of the Inner West Air Quality Community Reference Group**

*“The community groups are vital to the dissemination of the information to the public. The information itself provides an educational approach to the issues and the further it reaches into the community the better.”*

**West Gate Tunnel Neighbourhood Project** grants allocated \$500,000 to Hobsons Bay City Council towards revitalising the Pipeline Reserve in Brooklyn which aligns with the Federation Trail. \$50,000 from VicRoads.

**BrimbankCC** - Of the 55 actions for implementation of the **Brooklyn Evolution Strategy** over the 20 years, **73% are completed or in progress** including road improvements, landscaping, Federation Trail, planning amendments and entrance signage.

**Maribyrnong CC - The Maribyrnong Air Quality Improvement Plan**

**Hobson’s Bay CC \_ responds to the Inner West Air Quality Report**

**DoT and EPA focussed on urban roadside air pollution monitoring**



# New and Varied Approaches

2021 - 2022



**EPA Inner West Source Apportionment Project** new initiative aimed enhancing the understanding of PM2.5 pollution in the Inner West of Melbourne.

In response to the new EPA Victoria Act and with help from EPA Sunshine Groupe partnered with Delta and City Circle to develop a **Better Environment Plan for the Brooklyn area.**

**CSF Proteins in Laverton North begin upgrades**

**The General Environmental Duty 2021 introduced.** The new Act makes significant changes to the management of contaminated land with positive obligations of **Duty to Notify** and **Duty to Manage** any contaminated land sites which is enforceable under law.

**The Victorian Auditor General Report Improving Victoria's Air Quality 2018 (VAGO)** - EPA accepted all 5 recommendations and provided an action plan on implementation.

**Melbourne Water Zone 9 Pipeline Reserve Brooklyn Masterplan.**

**Nufarm's environmental commitment to improve odour management.**

**Victorian Air Quality Strategy released**





2023 - 2024



**Air Quality Forum** hosted and delivered by Hobsons Bay City Council

**MCC - The Better Buses for Melbourne's West Campaign** which is asking State government for more electric buses and therefore less fuel emissions affecting air quality.

**'Environment Protection on Country' (EPOC)**. EPA is working with Traditional Owners to ensure the opportunities under the Environment Protection Act 2017, achieve outcomes for the prevention of harm and healing of Country.

**Australian Tallow addresses odour compliance**

**Draft HBCC Air Quality Action and Advocacy Plan.**

**Air Quality Stakeholder Workshop** – In partnership with Brimbank and Hobsons Bay City Councils

**Hon Melissa Horne MP at BCRG - Clean air for Inner West project**

**Air pollution sources in inner west Melbourne Publication 2060**

Andrew Newman provided a short commentary on policy and strategy at Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) including rail and VicRoads.

**Department of Transport and Planning** working with Environment Victoria (EPA) to keep the mobile air monitoring stations

**No Truck Zones and Camera Technology**

