

Minutes from Community Forum #45
7.00pm, Wednesday 18 August 2010
Bob Druitt Training Centre



Forum Attendees:

Ren Lanzon, Les Wilson, Bruce Hunt, Brian Ross, Lewis Fellowes, Ron Heymer, Sam Ricciu, Kevin Dyer, Frank Bowen, Col Chapman, John Feddersen, Kelvin Banks, Errol Page, Phil Campbell, Courtney Brown, Mellissa Case, Ross Greenhalgh, Mike O’Neill, Diana Bozzetto.

Apologies:

Agenda:

- Welcome and Introduction – Ross Greenhalgh
- Standing items:
 - Complaints database – Diana Bozzetto
 - Community activities – Mellissa Case
- Discussion items – John Feddersen
- CHAG presentation – Ross Greenhalgh
- Alkali emissions – Ross Greenhalgh
- Questions and answers – Ross Greenhalgh
- Meeting closes at 9pm

Minutes / Action	By Whom	By When
Minutes of the Forum meeting published in the Gladstone Observer, Community Advocate and on the QAL website.	C Brown	17 September
Complaints Database – Diana Bozzetto		
<p>Presentation on community complaints including alkali, dust, noise and odour year to date. 69 complaints have been received with a large percentage (64%) relating to odour. An incident at the Calciners earlier in the year resulted in an increase in dust complaints.</p> <p>Unscheduled maintenance to the thermal oxidiser resulted in the unit being offline on numerous occasions; no odour complaints were received during that time.</p> <p>Five noise complaints were received, all attributed to hydroblasting noise carrying further during the winter months. Veolia is trialling a new hydrdoplast nozzle design with the aim of minimising noise.</p> <p>The third tree planting session was held this week where 700 trees were planted. Final tree planting will take place within the next few months to reach the 2010 target of 2800 trees.</p> <p>The tree survival rate was asked. The only known past issue was an occasion where increased salt water flowed into the ash pond revegetation area and affected a small number of trees.</p>		
Environmental Projects Update – Mike O’Neill		

A summary of progress on major projects to reduce onsite emissions was provided.

Odour

Relief Tanks

Major issues experienced with determining how to control odour from the relief tanks, research is continuing. Two workgroups are looking into options and one group is going to give an order of magnitude cost estimate for their proposal for QAL to review.

Dust

Cascade chute improvements designed and anticipated for installation in November. This is a similar design to Western Australian cascade chutes which have proven to reduce airborne dust when loading.

It was noted that dust was visible from the ship loader over the last few days.

Gas suspension calciners

Calciner dust system improvements – dust transfer system is now onto version three. In the Capital Budget it is proposed to design and install improvements to transfer point 1646 next year.

Since last forum, QAL has commissioned Unit 1's new dust slide systems. Unit 2's will be installed in November. Shown before and after photo, new airslides are a closed pipe so no dust can escape.

Unit 3's transfer system dust pump (underneath Calciners) had the pumps and rotary valves removed and replaced with a sealed system so dust cannot escape. This will soon be commissioned on Unit 1 also.

Question raised about steam emissions from Calciners looking different in colouration to plant steam emissions. Atmospheric conditions and different production rate of sections alters the appearance of steam emissions.

Alkali

Precipitation pump-off pumps – trialled a design on several pumps but were not successful, now looking into other options.

Environmental Monitoring System

In process of conducting more dust monitoring on site. Several more monitors will be placed on southwest side of plant to give live dust feedback to QAL's electronic monitoring system.

Community Activities – Mellissa Case

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<p>Electrical/Instrumentation Contract Coordinator David Smith won CQ Vocational Student of the Year at the Queensland Training Awards. QAL was a finalist in the Large Employer of the Year category.</p> <p>This year David also won a TAFE Trainee Award and Manufacturing Trainee of the Year at the prestigious Manufacturing Skills Queensland Industry Training Awards.</p> <p>Employee family picnic is on this Sunday, 22 August.</p> <p>Jamaican Minister for Mines and Energy, James Robertson, visited QAL with executives from QAL's owners, Rusal.</p> <p>Overview of recent community investments including Gladstone Show, Independent Schools Music workshops and the Multicultural Festival.</p> <p>Clean Up QAL day on tomorrow, all employees and contractors stop work and clean up site and neighbouring entrance roads. In the past Wuttke road has been cleaned; Pony Club road will be taken on this week.</p> <p>Lookout upgrade progressing, official opening scheduled for late October.</p> <p>Final service awards dinner for the year was held last month with a combined total of almost 3000 years of service.</p> <p>QAL was once again major sponsor of Ecofest and held a popular stall with activities for children and giveaways such as seed pots.</p>		
<p>Discussion items – John Feddersen</p>		
<p>Question raised regarding what is being done to decrease the smoking rate in Gladstone and the nuisance of coal dust.</p> <p>Only conclusive reason of higher rate of asthma in Gladstone is a four per cent higher smoking rate compared to the state average.</p> <p>In the Queensland Health study, responses from smokers/non-smokers, people working in industries etc were not differentiated.</p> <p>Questions regarding recent media report on Red Mud Dam water quality. How did this occur if there is routine sampling and ongoing monitoring?</p> <p>Process of the dam's discharge was explained. QAL has licence conditions to adhere to on suspended solids, dissolved oxygen, mass of solids, pH and others. QAL has a licence requirement to have 2% dissolved oxygen in dam water discharge. QAL had a licence breach at the end of last year where the dissolved oxygen</p>		

level reached 1.6%, which followed with the installation of aeration paddles to reoxygenate the water. The media article related to DERM providing QAL with a condition to evaluate this process and the impact of discharge on the environment.

Comments in Observer (SMS) regarding fishermen seeing red mud in estuary. Explanation of solids monitoring was given and measurements indicated no increase in turbidity in the estuary. DERM's review is regarding the dissolved oxygen, not the recent turbidity.

Question regarding QAL's asbestos removal program. The 2008 plan was to remove all friable (loose) asbestos by 2015. At that stage it was estimated to cost QAL ~\$80 million. During the Global Financial Crisis QAL slowed the program and it has since been ramped up again, although the costs and end date have increased. At the end of 2009 about 60% of friable asbestos had been removed. The program is now moving into more difficult areas with several pipe racks completed this year. A lot of work has gone into updating the asbestos register so people know where asbestos is located when maintenance work needs to be performed.

Question raised regarding hydroblasting and noise monitoring. It was confirmed that when a noise complaint is made hydroblasting is stopped immediately. When crews are hydroblasting tanks on the western side of the refinery, a condition of their work is that noise needs to be monitored in the nearby community during the evening. It was noted that the wind can change direction quickly and that if a complaint is received, hydroblasting is stopped. It was also raised that studies are being undertaken to minimise the amount of hydroblasting work carried out altogether.

It was noted that the Gladstone Regional Council is holding an Environmental Update and Visioning session for businesses and industries on Friday 27 August. From this workshop Council anticipates it will start up a community-based environmental reference group to compliment DERM's industry reference group.

CHAG Presentation – Ross Greenhalgh:

Clean and Healthy Air for Gladstone Report

Members were given copies of the report summary and RG gave an overview of results. It is the fourth and final report from Queensland Health and is based on the health risk assessment results combined with data from DERM's fixed and mobile monitoring stations taken over a two year period. Report's intent was to look at distribution of listed pollutants in Gladstone air shed, as well as dispersion modelling for cumulative industry pollutants. Findings were summarised: pollutants in Gladstone were

significantly lower than national standards. Only pollutant closer to national standard was particulates, which could be attributed to severe bush fires during the study period. Gladstone air was not found to have any health risk to the community.

A question was raised about the report stating particulate data was below national standard, though there are still a higher number of people with respiratory issues. It was mentioned that standards cannot protect every person as some people are more sensitive to certain issues, such as asthmatics.

A question was raised whether pollutants could contribute to the higher rate of cancer in Gladstone. Queensland Health's second report looked at cancer rates in Gladstone specifically and found that one type of cancer was increased, although only marginally. As an example, benzene is known to contribute to causing cancer, however benzene levels in Gladstone proved significantly lower than the Australian standard.

Since the report's release there has been a meeting between DERM and industry to see what ongoing monitoring will occur. Some compounds will not be continued (those with concentrations too low to measure) and industries have agreed to continue measurement of other pollutants. Some monitoring station data is live on DERM's website, other statistics which require analysis are updated monthly.

Question was raised whether there could be a statistic inaccuracy in DERM's measurements of data. QAL's south Gladstone stations produced the same measurements as DERM's so can act as a cross-check for data accuracy. Industry has asked DERM to provide live data to them so if there are any fluctuations in measurements a 'cause and effect' and be determined.

It was noted that this study is close to world's best practice with very few other studies known to have gone to a similar level of depth.

Alkali Presentation – Ross Greenhalgh:

QAL has conducted stack measuring of alkali emissions from Calcination since 2004. Spikes on graph have been traced to individual events in the plant, for example filling the Precipitation tanks from the top, a blowout in Digestion. All spikes in early 2004 related to tertiary hose out, resulting in work completed to use the moon buggy to perform hose out. The subsequent decrease in alkali emissions was shown in the graph.

High tanks in Calcination were taken out of service, resulting in a

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<p>large decrease in alkali emissions which coincided with a decrease in alkali complaints. There's still work to be done and progress is being made to bottom-fill Precipitation tanks.</p> <p>Alkali pads are placed at the community/plant boundary to measure any deposition in the community; these have also shown a reduction in alkali emissions.</p>		
Meeting schedule:		
<p>The next community forum will be held Wednesday 10 November (TBC) with a tour of the Red Mud Dam, followed by a BBQ and forum meeting at QAL.</p>		

Meeting closed: 8.40pm

Attachments:

- Draft of advertisement
- Complaints Database
- Environmental Projects Update
- Community Activities.