

Minutes from Community Forum #48
7pm, Wednesday 17 August 2011
Bob Druitt Training Centre



Forum Attendees:

Kev Dyer, Sam Ricciu, Brian Ross, Bruce Hunt, Frank Bowen, Errol Page, Les Wilson, John Feddersen, Kelvin Banks, Phil Campbell, Mike O'Neill, Ross Greenhalgh, Diana Bozzetto, Courtney Brown and Crystal Linderberg.

Apologies:

Kurt Heidecker, Dulcie Benn, Cr. Col Chapman and Len Smith

Agenda:

6:45pm – forum members to arrive and enjoy refreshments

7.00pm – Forum commences

- Welcome and Introduction – Ross Greenhalgh
- Standing items:
 - - Complaints database – Diana Bozzetto
 - - Environmental Projects update – Mike O'Neill
 - - Community activities – Courtney Brown
- Discussion items – John Feddersen
- Co-generation project – Mike O'Neill
- 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.	Courtney Brown	16 September
Complaints Database – Diana Bozzetto		
<p>Presentation on community complaints was provided, including alkali, dust, noise and odour year to date. A total of 68 complaints have been received with the majority relating to dust (48%) followed by odour (38%), noise (10%) and alkali (3%).</p> <p>Majority of complaints in 2011 year to date (YTD) were due to dust and odour. About 70% of these dust complaints were due to visible emissions from the wharf area. July's odour complaints were from the red mud dam due to still weather conditions.</p> <p>Two alkali complaints YTD have been confirmed due to QAL. Seven are with the insurance assessor, with some awaiting complainants to arrange vehicle inspection with assessor.</p> <p>Forum member questioned whether community complaints were decreasing and what QAL was doing. Graphs show decrease over the years, particularly since new calciners and baghouses were installed to minimise dust from those areas. Now those issues have improved QAL is working on other projects to address the</p>		

Minutes from Community Forum #48
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<p>current highest concerns - wharf alumina emissions and odour.</p> <p>Forum member asked if they are the same complainants or same issues. The dust complaints are mostly from the same complainants relating to the issues QAL is trying to address in capital environmental improvement projects.</p> <p>Seven noise complaints YTD, in particular on 26 June received two complaints. The cause of the noise was due to steam venting from the Boilerhouse. This was a reportable incident to DERM. This was an unusual occurrence and lead to an internal investigation with the issue rectified.</p> <p>Dust mitigation at Ash Ponds – sand ponds slashed in July produced around 800 plus bales of hay. This hay has been used to cover the ash pond for dust suppression.</p> <p>QAL’s First Response Team conducted a series of controlled burns of various areas surrounding QAL during July and early August. These controlled burns were conducted as a preventative measure to reduce the hazard of an uncontrolled fire. QAL Fire management plan now completed.</p> <p>Weed Management of QAL buffer zone to commence in September.</p> <p>Annual noise monitoring survey is complete and is in compliance with QAL’s licence.</p> <p>Tree planting continuing in 2011 with a target of 2 100 trees.</p>		
<p>Environmental Projects Update – Mike O’Neill</p>		
<p>A summary of progress on major environmental improvement projects was provided.</p> <p>Odour reduction;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Still reviewing options for capturing steam and odour from Relief Tanks. The company who is doing the proposal requested more time and the report is expected in August/September. <p>Dust minimisation;</p> <p>Shiploading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade to alumina loading boom went well. Changed tailgate design to minimise dust, however in the process found damage to the actual boom. This is now being rectified. • Modification to boom door will be completed early August, with the aim to minimise dust escaping when lifting up the loading boom. <p>Calciner Dust System Upgrade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit 1 and 3 operational, Unit 2 will be completed during current turnaround. 		

Dust projects

Island A frame Airslide Improvement

- 1631/1632 airslide improvement - Design complete, August approval.

Wharf Alumina Transfer

- Options being investigated and evaluated.

Island Alumina Transfer

1646/1649 transfer point. Design completed, looks like a great design and should show some good improvements.

BSL transfer improvements

With BSL for review.

Alkali emission reduction

Precipitation pump-off pumps

Design phase complete. Wash Tanks have been cleaned out and currently being inspected. Construction for trial scheduled in quarter four.

Environmental Monitoring

Four additional monitoring systems are being added into the community.

Forum member questioned how much each environmental monitoring system is worth.

Approx. \$50 000 per unit, plus extra for security, power, radio communication, etc.

Community member wanted clarification of dust improvements, alumina vs coal.

All these improvement projects are for alumina dust, none for coal at the moment.

More than half of the alumina dust improvement projects on the mainland are complete. Focus is on the transfer and loading to cut down on airborne alumina emissions.

Forum member questioned when the projects are completed would it minimise dust experienced at Barney Point.

The improvement projects are mainly to minimise visual emissions during alumina loading and transfer.

Forum member questioned who receives data from monitors.

Data from QAL's monitoring stations is downloaded to QAL's process information system on a daily basis. Options to have real time data are being investigated.

Community member questioned whether cascading chute wind limit is still in use.

Minutes from Community Forum #48
7pm, Wednesday 17 August 2011
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<p>It is and better controls are in place. The cascade chute is better since modifications but it is still being improved.</p> <p>HSEC Manager demonstrated how to access the live data from DERM's Gladstone monitoring stations. Example of dust particulates from South Gladstone the previous day, showed the regulation limit and that day's readings. Forum member noted that the readings were significantly lower than the regulated limit.</p> <p>Users can select monitoring station, date and time they wish to view. www.derm.qld.gov.au/environmental_management/air/air_quality_monitoring/</p>		
<p>Community Activities – Courtney Brown</p>		
<p>A summary of internal and community activities was provided.</p> <p>QAL celebrated World Environment Day <i>Forests: Nature at your service</i> With Ecofest on 5 June. Proudly sponsoring the Gladstone Arts Council's Green Scenes short film competition again this year, awarding \$1 500 worth of prizes to local budding filmmakers. Along with other gold sponsors QAL presented Conservation Volunteers with a \$3 000 donation.</p> <p>Several items were donated to local community groups including two first aid kits valued at \$150 each to Gladstone's Junior Mudcrabs Football club and Central Football club. Gladstone Area Group Apprentices Ltd received a donation of 16 pairs of steel-capped boots. Other local organisations supported since June include; Calliope Country Club, Crime Stoppers Gladstone, Child Safety handbook, Benaraby School Country Fair, Clinton State School, Relay for Life, Gladstone Show Society and Mt Larcom Show Society.</p> <p>11 QAL apprentices competed against other local apprentices in the regional apprentice WorldSkills Competition at the Gladstone TAFE in July. Competition is held across Australia every two years giving apprentices the opportunity to represent their local community with their developed skills. Results will be announced on 25 August.</p> <p>Employees and contractors participated in a site wide clean up afternoon on 21 July. Recording 14 tonnes of waste segregated into general, steel and timber at the waste transfer facility.</p> <p>QAL held two service award dinners during June and July, celebrating five to 40 years of service. Two employees celebrated the impressive 40 year milestone; two reached 35 years and 15 reached 30 years. In total recognising 1 520 years of collective service!</p> <p>The QAL Relay for Life team fundraised on site with donations from employees and contractors raising \$5 876 for the Queensland Cancer Council. QAL donated \$2 000 towards the team's fundraising efforts, as well as approving a 'free day off work' for the team to raffle, raising \$760 alone.</p>		

Minutes from Community Forum #48
7pm, Wednesday 17 August 2011
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<p>QAL was a sponsor of the Gladstone Multicultural Festival and provided financial and in-kind support to its Jamaican employees to hold a stall showcasing their culture. The first-time display impressed the crowds and won the 'best stall' category. Apprentices were involved with fabricating three Jamaican 'jerk pan' barbeques.</p> <p>The new look QAL high visibility shirts were revealed. The rollout will take place in coming months to meet the new Australian standards with all employees to wear the new shirt by January 2012. Negotiations are in place for the green QAL shirts to be donated to a local charity group and recycled.</p>		
<p>Discussion items – John Feddersen</p>		
<p>Update on potential alkali complaints from last meeting that were pending the insurance assessor At the previous meeting on 31 May there were no confirmed alkali complaints. There are now two confirmed alkali private car complaints for 2011 YTD with seven potential alkali complaints with the insurance assessor. Four of those are from 2010.</p> <p>Possible sources of bauxite types for the plant Monohydrate and trihydrate (higher quality, sweetener bauxite) are currently what QAL use in its process, sourced from the Weipa mine. A lot of media coverage recently with bauxite deposits found in Mundubbera and Fiji. These deposits seem to be good quality with low silica content.</p> <p>Carbon tax impact / implications HSEC manager presented figures on cost implications to industries, consumers and QAL.</p> <p>Draft Bill released by Government – by year 2020 target is to reduce Australia's emissions of CO₂ by 20% and by 80% by 2050. A cap and emissions trading system will be introduced to facilitate this. Businesses will need to bid for and purchase permits allocated by the Government.</p> <p>QAL is in the category of 'energy intensive trade exposed' which means industries that cannot pass on their increased costs to the buyer as they compete in a global market. The other group of industries, mostly domestic, will pass on the rising costs of the carbon tax to consumers.</p> <p>Ways for QAL to decrease carbon emissions were discussed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fuel switching – coal to gas 2. Energy efficient projects. <p>A feasibility study to build a co-generation plant on site is underway. If the facility is approved and built, it will decrease QAL's total CO₂ emissions by about 25%.</p> <p>DERM's new licence as reported in the previous minutes</p>		

Minutes from Community Forum #48
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<p>Licence emailed to J Feddersen. Will be put on external website in coming months.</p> <p>Discuss any innovative technology changes to reduce alkali since the hydroblasting robots were introduced. Video shown on the effectiveness of the robot arms (concrete pumping arms with a hydroblast nozzle on the end) used to hose out tertiary Precipitation tanks to reduce alkali misting. These arms enter the tanks and can get closer to the source of product build up, reducing airborne misting. The arms have been in use for over a year and are proving very effective.</p> <p>Forum member questioned how much caustic solution is in the blast. The video showing scale build up was just water spraying, but some scale is treated with spent liquor using this method.</p> <p>Community member questioned whether dust suppressant sprayed on trains is still happening and if it is it working. Mines have been using dust suppressant for over two years and it seems to be working well. Their independent studies at the time proved it to reduce airborne emissions during train travel.</p> <p>Community member raised a question regarding the HSEC report and health. The member was under the impression it would include community health information but it did not. The report is a compilation of data relating to QAL's health, safety, environment and community initiatives for the previous year. There are other health programs QAL undertakes for the benefit of its workforce and beyond, such as free skin checks for all employees and their families. QAL also actively promotes health education when available and supports initiatives like the local Men's Resource Centre, various charities etc.</p>	C Brown	October
<p>Co-generation – Mike O'Neill</p>		
<p>An overview of the co-generation unit currently in feasibility study was provided. The proposal is for a 160MW gas fired facility which will replace some of QAL's existing coal fired boiler steam production.</p> <p>The facility would include the following components.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Combustion Turbine Generator (CTG). ▪ 160MW Electrical Generator. ▪ Heat Recovery Steam Generator (HRSG) ▪ Water Treatment plant to condition water suitable for use in the HRSG. ▪ Gas skid for supply of gas to the gas turbine and HRSG supplementary firing. ▪ Boiler feedwater pumps. ▪ Compressor washing skid for periodic cleaning of the gas turbine compressor. <p>Most Western Australian refineries and Yarwun run with co-generation</p>		

Minutes from Community Forum #48
7pm, Wednesday 17 August 2011
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<p>facilities. If the project goes ahead at QAL, it will be a stand-alone unit built on the south-western side of the refinery.</p> <p>Forum member questioned how the unit would affect QAL's NOx emissions. NOx produced from the unit will be much less than that from the coal fired boilers. The unit will also back out some steam generation from the coal fired boilers as well.</p> <p>Forum member questioned when it will be up and running. The study will be complete mid 2012, so if owners approve then commissioning is expected late 2014.</p> <p>Forum member questioned the CO₂ emissions reduction if the unit were operational. QAL currently produces 4m tonnes of CO₂ annually, 1m tonnes will be eliminated with the co-generation unit in operation</p>		
<p>Questions and Answers? Forum member asked if it was possible to see pictures of inside a co-generation unit and gas turbine. These will be provided at next meeting.</p> <p>Forum member questioned management's thoughts on the expected population increase in Gladstone.</p> <p>Issue for all of us is trying to survive the construction boom. Once the LNG facilities are up and running it will decrease some of the pressure on the city, but it will be a long process. Accommodation and health services are big issues that everyone is concerned about, including QAL, and opportunities are being explored.</p>	M O'Neill	Next forum
<p>Meeting schedule:</p>		
<p>The next forum will celebrate 10 years of QAL's community forum and will be held in November/December.</p>		

Meeting closed: 8:50pm

Attachments:

- Summary of presentations