

**Minutes from Community Forum #49  
10 year celebration  
7:30pm, Wednesday 14 December 2011  
Bob Druitt Training Centre**



**Forum Attendees:**

Brian and Rosemary Ross, Bruce and Robin Hunt, Dulcie Benn, Brian Whelan, Frank Bowen, Errol Page, Les Wilson, John and Elaine Feddersen, Kelvin Banks, MLA Liz Cunningham, Cr. Col Chapman, Phil Campbell, Rennie Fritschy, Don Arnold, Kurt Heidecker, Mike Sisley, Ross Greenhalgh, Diana Bozzetto, Courtney Brown, Crystal Linderberg and Lucy Warren.

**Apologies:**

Kev Dyer, Sam Ricciu, Paul and Ros Tooker.

**Agenda**

**6.00pm – Training Centre foyer**

- Forum members, guests and QAL representatives arrive and enjoy informal buffet dinner

**6:45pm – Training Centre, Boyne Room**

- Welcome and housekeeping – Ross Greenhalgh
- Forum history – Past MD Rennie Fritschy
- Forum progression and thanks – MD Phil Campbell
- 2001 – 2011 major environmental improvements – Ross Greenhalgh
- 2011 Environmental projects update – Ross Greenhalgh

**7:30pm – Conclude 10 year forum celebrations, proceed with general forum**

- Standing items:
  - Complaints database – Diana Bozzetto
  - Community activities – Courtney Brown
- Discussion items – John Feddersen
- Co-generation plant update – Mike Sisley
- Questions and answers – Ross Greenhalgh

Minutes general forum / Action	By Whom	By When
<p>Ross Greenhalgh reviewed the major environmental improvements over the past 10 years. The list included 19 dust reduction projects, 10 greenhouse gas emission projects, 2 noise reduction projects, 9 alkali reduction projects, 9 odour reduction projects and 9 general environmental improvement projects.</p> <p>Reducing our impact on the environment is important to us and we have actively strived to improve plant performance over the years. QAL will continue to look for opportunities to operate the refinery safer, cleaner and better.</p>		

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<p>Minutes of the Forum meeting published in the Gladstone Observer, Community Advocate and on the QAL website.</p>	<p>Crystal Linderberg</p>	<p>6 January 2012</p>
<p><b>Complaints Database – Diana Bozzetto</b></p>		
<p>Presentation on community complaints was provided, including alkali, dust, noise and odour year to date. A total of 98 complaints against target of 93 for 2011 with 37% dust, 42% odour, 14% noise, 5% alkali, 2% other (health concern).</p> <p>Majority of complaints in 2011 were due to odour and dust (especially visible fugitive alumina). Six of these complaints (alkali) are with the independent insurers pending assessment. Some incidents had two types of complaints logged therefore incident type is greater than number of incidents logged.</p> <p>Odour continues to be high source of complaints. The thermal oxidiser is found to be operational during some of those complaints, however in November the thermal oxidiser was not operating 100% of the time. In that instance the wind speed/direction, temperature and thermal oxidiser function were all in alignment contributing to the odour smelt by the complainant.</p> <p>There have been five confirmed alkali complaints for 2011 (all five were alkali on private vehicles) and five are currently with the insurance assessor.</p> <p>No questions raised.</p>		
<p><b>Community Activities – Courtney Brown</b></p>		
<p>A summary of internal and community activities was provided.</p> <p>Every year QAL donates two \$300 bursaries to each of the eight local high schools to two students who have excelled in Maths and Science.</p> <p>The 2011 QAL Scholarship was awarded to Denica Hope, a first year Bachelor of Accounting and Diploma of Professional Practice student. Denica will receive \$5 000 per annum to assist throughout her studies. Damien Hensen received the \$1 000 Encouragement Award.</p> <p>QAL received the Mining Industry Skill's Centre (MSIC) Best Training Practices and Processes – Company Award. Last year QAL offered over 100 training courses, delivered by internal and external providers.</p> <p>QAL held two major fundraising events in November supporting Breast Cancer and Prostate Cancer awareness: Movember - employees grew moustaches and raised over \$10 000. Pink Aluminators - competed in the Sunshine Coast's 'Pink Triathlon', raising over \$3 000.</p> <p>Seventeen university students commenced working on as part of the three month Vacation Employment Program. Students will be working in: human</p>		

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resources, safety, health, information technology, community relations and engineering including chemical, civil, mechanical and electrical.

QAL hosted two 'No Joke Blokes' men's health sessions on site in November. The sessions provided valuable tips and information on prostate health, support and other issues specific to men. Australian Cricket Legend, Merv Hughes, and two medical professionals facilitated the sessions with over 200 employees, contractors and QAL retirees attending.

QAL has donated to 15 different non-profit groups and events this quarter. It also provided Gladstone Hockey Association with \$14 000 of electrical equipment for field upgrades and Kin Kora State School were able to complete their garden beds thanks to a \$2 000 donation from the Reef Guardian Fund.

No questions raised.

**Discussion items – John Feddersen**

**1. Recent plant odour**

The thermal oxidiser generally reduces odour by about 40% when in operation. At the end of November we received the majority of odour complaints when the oxidiser was not operating due to scheduled maintenance work.

HSEC Manager drew diagram illustrating how the thermal oxidiser works to burn the odorous gases and how the knock-out pot works.

QN. Why doesn't QAL have another oxidiser that could be used when this system is offline?

ANS. QAL is aware the majority of odour comes from the Digestion relief tanks, so the intent is to combine this technical solution with an upgrade of the thermal oxidiser system.

**2. Updates on Rio Tinto Alcan's announcement to divest some of its assets**

RTA balanced smelters and refineries based on a portfolio analysis. They strongly believe the 13 assets are viable and will do better under new management with their strong balance sheets. Those divested are now grouped under a separate business called Pacific Aluminium. Those sites will remain business as usual.

QN. What are the ramifications for QAL?

ANS. Nothing foreseeable at this stage. Boyne Smelter will remain a customer of QAL.

**3. Update on Carbon Tax**

Carbon dioxide emissions are calculated based on the quantity of fuel used. These calculations are based on agreed emission factors.

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QN. Does the Aluminium industry receive a rebate or penalty on the carbon tax?

ANS. Alumina refining is classed as an 'energy intensive trade exposed' industry that will receive 92.5% free permits of the industry average for the first year. This percentage decreases by 1.3% each year there after.

QAL continues to monitor developments regarding the tax.

**4. Clean and Healthy Air for Gladstone (CHAG) report** - Summary of report provided by Don Arnold, Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM)

Congratulated QAL's forum reaching 10 years.

Gave a brief overview of the Clean and Healthy Air for Gladstone (CHAG) project that began four years ago. One of the largest and in depth programs of its kind in Australia and even internationally. Results were compared against a total of 25 benchmarking reports from industries nationally. The report included a health opinion survey, hospital data, environmental monitoring program, going from monitoring seven sites a day and increased to 160 over 12 months to measure for more pollutants.

Initial CHAG report results were assessed by QLD health and identified current circumstances in Gladstone. Level of contaminants didn't exceed guideline values, while a few items that did exceed the limits were due to major environmental issues at time; i.e. dust storms and bushfires. The report can be accessed on the DERM website.

The final DERM report on this study including recommendations for a path forward was issued this month, with 20 recommendations. Main items are:

1. Amend and standardise conditions under operational licenses.
2. Found that if all industries emit over or at their license limit at once, then ambient health would be an issue. Most run with a 10% buffer under their license limit.
3. Age of a site is a risk, how maintenance is conducted and license conditions relating to that.
4. Monitoring program to continue. Not all 160 will continue to be monitored, some of these were so low or infrequent they were difficult to measure.
5. More work needs to be done on the cumulative factor of industry emissions, particularly when approving new industry in Gladstone. Land use, looking at approvals on site development, i.e. a lot of industrial sites in the same area would increase the risk.
6. The main focus of why healthy air and water was started in the first place. Look at improving how it is reported back to community.

QN. Is the term 'air-sheds', used up to Calliope?

ANS. Industries on the coastal side of the mountain range could contribute to 'air-shed' atmospheric conditions. Not everyone agrees with term 'air-shed',

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<p>but many in the community relate to that term.</p>		
<p><b>Co-generation – Mike Sisley</b></p>		
<p>A technical overview of the co-generation unit currently in feasibility study was provided. The proposal is for a 160 MW gas fired facility which will replace some of QAL's existing coal fired boiler steam production, by having the ability to produce both electricity and steam at same time</p> <p>Standard - open cycle gas turbine (160MW) is not an efficient option with 32-35% energy efficiency. In most cases they are converted to combined cycle unit which increases efficiency to 50%.</p> <p>Co-gen (160mw) is where electrical energy is produced and steam is generated from the waste heat. Energy efficiency increases to 85%.</p> <p>Feasibility study completed in quarter four this year.</p> <p>QN. Is it only worth building one co-gen unit?        ANS. As a comparison, if three co-gen units were commissioned it could replace QAL's boilerhouse however any decision will be based on economics and gas supply.</p> <p>QN. Are the units noisy?        ANS. The standard is 85db at one metre which is in the design limits of the unit.</p> <p>QN. What is the down time?        ANS. Operating factor on the units is typically around 98%.</p> <p>QN. Would there be any noise if there was a catastrophic breakdown?        ANS. As with any catastrophic breakdown of large equipment there would be noise involved, but these units require regular maintenance routines, so the likelihood would be minimal.</p> <p>QN. What is the back up when down for maintenance?        ANS. The plant would go back to relying on the coal fired boilers in the boilerhouse and power supplied from the grid.</p> <p>QN. Is its oxygen intake what's in the air, or pure oxygen?        ANS. Normal air intake would be used.</p>		

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**Questions and Answers?**

QN. Have the number of noise complaints gone up? Is this due to hydro blasting?  
 ANS. There was an unplanned steam release earlier in the year from the boilerhouse roof which resulted in two complaints. This shows there are sometimes other sources of noise and it's not always found to be from hydroblasting. Often the complainant could call because of hydroblasting, although after investigations another cause may be linked so we can determine and stop the noise source.

**Meeting schedule:**

The next forum will be held with the QAL board in February 2012.

Meeting closed: 8:44pm

**Attachments:**

- Summary of presentations