

Minutes



Community Reference Group (CRG) for the Burwood Beach Wastewater Treatment Works (WWTW) Stage 3 Upgrade – Master Planning and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Phase

MEETING DATE AND TIME: 1 July 2010, 4 pm

VENUE: Bimet Lodge

PRESENT:

John Flannery (JF)	Chairman
Simon Fane (SF)	Hunter Community and Environment Centre
Michele Peden (MP)	local resident/customer
Tim Ryan (TR)	Merewether National Surfing Reserve Committee
Ross Taggart (RT)	Merewether Surf Lifesaving Club
Brad Warren (BW)	OceanWatch
Scott Wiseman (SW)	Merewether Heights Public School P&C
Greg Bone (GB)	Manager, System Planning (Hunter Water)
Peter Dennis (PD)	General Manager System Strategy and Sustainability (Hunter Water)
Lauren Randall (LR)	Project Manager (Hunter Water)
Tara Pagnutti (TP)	Project Engineer (Hunter Water)
Lisa McDermott (LM)	Consultation and Communications (Hunter Water)

1. PERSONAL INTRODUCTIONS

JF provided a brief introduction to the group, outlining Hunter Water's plans to continue the CRG process through the Stage 3 Upgrade project with the newly expanded CRG. Each CRG member briefly introduced themselves and their respective community groups.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Chris Tola (Surfrider Foundation Australia) and Bob Hawes (Property Council of Australia). These members will be briefed following the meeting.

3. ADMINISTRATION

Terms of Reference:

The draft Terms of Reference for the CRG was circulated by JF prior to the meeting. No comments on the draft Terms of Reference were received.

Meeting Frequency:

It is anticipated that meetings will be held approximately monthly for the first three

meetings, and every two or three months thereafter. It was agreed that the next meeting should be scheduled with a site visit of the plant, to assist with the groups understanding of the plant and the project. (Further details discussed in General Business.)

4. PROJECT OVERVIEW

Background and previous/current capital works (including Stage 2 Upgrade):

GB and LR gave a presentation on the history of the Burwood Beach treatment plant and previous/current capital work, including the current \$43m Stage 2 Upgrade of the Burwood Beach WWTW that is currently under construction.

As a result of questions from the CRG, it was confirmed that:

- Hunter Water has been licensed to discharge biosolids from the secondary treatment plant at Burwood Beach to the Pacific Ocean since 1993. An Environmental Monitoring Program has been in place since that time which to date has shown no significant impacts from the discharge.
- At Hunter Water's other treatment plants biosolids are stabilised, dewatered and eventually transported offsite for beneficial reuse (eg. for mine site rehabilitation).

ACTION – A schematic diagram illustrating the outfall tunnel and diffusers to be provided with more information on why the effluent and biosolids are discharged separately.

Future work (Stage 3 Upgrade):

LR outlined the Stage 3 Upgrade planning process. A range of options for long-term biosolids and effluent management at Burwood Beach WWTW will be evaluated as part of the Stage 3 Upgrade planning process to determine the most sustainable solution.

As a result of questions from the CRG, it was confirmed that:

- Anaerobic digestion of the biosolids will be considered as an option for Stage 3.
- The assessment of the project under Part 5 of the Environmental Planning & Assessment (EP&A) Act is considered appropriate. Hunter Water will be the determining authority. However, the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW) has a licensing role and the upgrade cannot be implemented without their independent approval. Hunter Water plans to hold a Government Stakeholder Briefing within the next two months. The approval pathway will be discussed at this meeting.
- LR is the Project Manager and will be assisted by TP.
- A Technical Advisory Group will be used comprising a range of personnel from across Hunter Water to ensure all aspects of the project are appropriately considered.
- Consultants will be engaged to undertake the necessary technical/engineering and environmental investigations.
- Hunter Water's prices (and budgets) are set by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART). Any funding required for upgrade works (at Burwood Beach WWTW and elsewhere) must be justifiable to IPART. Any increases to customer bills will be considered as part of the options assessment process.

- Hunter Water is committed to making sustainable decisions for wastewater treatment.

ACTION – Further feedback on the approval pathway will be provided to the CRG after the Government Stakeholder Briefing.

5. CONSULTATION PLAN

LM presented the consultation plan for the Stage 3 Upgrade and outlined the role of the CRG and other stakeholder involvement.

The CRG volunteered to exchange contact details (email addresses) so that they can communicate with each other between meetings.

ACTION – The Member Contact Details sheet will be updated to include email addresses and distributed to members.

6. PREPARATION FOR NEXT MEETING

LR provided an overview of the anticipated points of discussion for the next meeting.

Issues and values:

Hunter Water is seeking input from the community and other stakeholder regarding the values that are considered important for the Burwood Beach WWTW and surrounding area, and the key issues that should be addressed as part of the Stage 3 Upgrade project.

CRG members were encouraged to work with their networks over the next month in order to provide feedback and have a discussion at the next meeting on the key issues and values for the project.

A questionnaire was handed out to facilitate easy feedback from community members which is to be returned in person to the CRG representatives, or returned by mail, fax or email directly to Hunter Water.

Application forms for the Register of Interested Parties were also distributed for those people who may wish to receive updates and further information as the project progresses.

ACTION – An electronic copy of the questionnaire will be distributed to members.

Information on the Burwood Beach WWTW Stage 3 Upgrade is available on the Hunter Water website. The web page will be kept up to date throughout the planning process.

ACTION – A link to the project webpage will be distributed to members.

Options:

LR explained that a “long-list” of options will be drawn up in July. The list will be discussed at the next CRG meeting (in August). Following that, a rigorous screening process will take place to narrow down to a short-list of options for further development/study.

As a result of questions from the CRG, it was confirmed that:

- Hunter Water will continue to explore opportunities for recycled water use within the Burwood catchment and potential decentralised treatment opportunities as part of its ongoing planning processes.
- Hunter Water ‘s capital works program involves \$1.55 billion of investment over the next 5 years on a broad range of projects related to water and wastewater treatment, water and wastewater networks, water resources and recycled water projects.
- Information on other major projects that may be relevant to the Burwood Beach WWTW Stage 3 Upgrade project (eg. Newcastle Sewerage System Upgrade) will be provided as the project proceeds.

ACTION – An overview of Hunter Water’s capital works portfolio and information on other major projects relevant to the Burwood Beach project to be provided at future meetings.

7. STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

Standing items may be added to the agenda as the project proceeds.

8. GENERAL BUSINESS

Site Visit:

A site visit to the Burwood Beach WWTW will be arranged prior to the next meeting. The meeting will then be held onsite at the treatment plant (in the Theatrette). Further details will be provided to members when the site visit is confirmed.

As the plant is currently a construction site, managed by the Hunter Treatment Alliance, appropriate clothing (i.e. long pants and long sleeves) and sturdy enclosed footwear (preferably with steel-caps) are required. Hard hats, high visibility vests and safety glasses will be provided by Hunter Water. Without appropriate safety gear, CRG members will not be allowed to enter the construction site. All visitors must also complete a brief safety induction for the site.

Meeting time:

To make planning for future meetings easier, it was agreed that CRG meetings will be held on the first Thursday of the month.

ACTION – Future CRG meetings will be held on the first Thursday of the month (every month until September and every two or three months thereafter).

Payment forms:

LR reminded members to return their payment forms to enable the \$100 payment per meeting attended to be credited to the relevant bank account or donated to charity as directed by the CRG members.

9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on 5 August 2010. Subject to confirmation of the site visit details, the meeting will be held onsite at the Burwood Beach WWTW theatre at 4 pm.

MEETING CLOSED: The meeting was closed by JF at 6:15 pm

Action		Responsibility
1	A schematic diagram illustrating the outfall tunnel and diffusers to be provided with more information on why the effluent and biosolids are discharged separately.	LR
2	Further feedback on the approval pathway will be provided to the CRG after the Government Stakeholder Briefing.	LR
3	The Member Contact Details sheet will be updated to include email addresses and distributed to members.	LR & JF
4	An electronic copy of the questionnaire will be distributed to members.	LR & JF
5	A link to the project webpage will be distributed to members.	LR & JF
6	An overview of Hunter Water's capital works portfolio and information on other major projects relevant to the Burwood Beach project to be provided at future meetings.	LR & JF
7	Future CRG meetings will be held on the first Thursday of the month (every month until September and every two or three months thereafter).	LR & JF