Burwood Beach WWTW Stage 3 Upgrade
Community Reference Group

Minutes of the Meeting

Date: Thursday 24 October 2013
Time: 4pm – 6pm
Location: Anzac Room II
South Newcastle League’s Club
46 Llewellyn Street
Merewether

Members Present:

- Dr W.E.J. Paradice  Independent Facilitator
- Dr John Mackenzie  Hunter Community Environment Centre
- Mr Tim Ryan  Merewether National Surf Reserve Committee
- Mr Ross Taggart  Merewether Surf Life Saving Club
- Mr Chris Tola  Surfrider Foundation Australia
- Mr Brad Warren  Oceanwatch

In attendance:

- Mr Greg Bone  Hunter Water
- Ms Emma Berry  Hunter Water
- Ms Lauren Randall  Hunter Water
- Mr Angus Fanning  Hunter Water
- Ms Jennifer Pritchard  Hunter Water
- Ms Jade Herriman  Institute for Sustainable Futures
- Mr Tom Boyle  Institute for Sustainable Futures

Meeting commenced at 4.12pm

ITEM 1 – WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND INTRODUCTIONS

Apologies:

- Mr Bob Hawes  Property Council of Australia
- Ms Michelle Peden  Local resident/customer
- Mr Scott Wiseman  Merewether Heights Public School P&C

ITEM 2 – AGENDA OVERVIEW, CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Mr Tola declared a non-pecuniary interest in that he is an employee of Newcastle Council and this organisation is mentioned throughout the Agenda.

ITEM 3 – CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting on 4 May 2013 were confirmed as correct.

*Moved John Mackenzie*
*Seconded Tim Ryan*

ITEM 4 – MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES
1. It was confirmed that oysters for the Oyster Watch Study were depurated prior to deployment and tested for original levels of contaminants.

2. It was confirmed that Hunter Water intends to undertake pro-active and positive media activities in early 2014 in conjunction with CRG Members.

3. A discussion paper on stormwater and the Newcastle Catchment has been circulated to Members to provide information on the relative contribution of stormwater including bypass flows.

4. Hunter Water has discussed with Newcastle City Council opportunities for collecting and sharing stormwater data. Council has a limited budget for sampling and the challenge is to identify cost-effective programs for priority catchments.

5. It was confirmed that Hunter Water will consider the implications of Newcastle City Council’s Urban Renewal Plan in the Burwood Beach WWTW Stage 3 upgrade planning process.

Resolved:
All matters arising from previous minutes have been addressed.

ITEM 5 – PROCESS OF MEMBERS INTERACTING WITH THEIR STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

1. Members outlined how they typically distribute information to their representative groups and provide feedback to Hunter Water (see below).

2. Representative from Merewether National Surf Reserve Committee suggested a public event at the surf club would be an opportunity to provide information to the public once the public exhibition materials are available.

3. Representative from Surfrider Foundation Australia advised a Festival of Surfing is being organised at the end of February 2014 to coincide with the finals of Surf-Fest. This may present an opportunity for community engagement once the public exhibition materials are available.

Member for Hunter Community Environment Centre
- Information to be provided via email circulation
- Discusses at meetings
- The organisation will make a submission directly as part of the consultation process

Merewether National Surf Reserve Committee
- 200-300 people on email list
- Active Facebook

Surfrider Foundation Australia
- Email, Facebook (same as the others)
- Provides verbal report at the AGM

Merewether Surf Lifesaving Club
- Engagement and information sharing will occur when information is at a stage to be shared
- Joint briefing with other groups

Oceanwatch
- Has spoken at Fisherman’s Co-op Board Meetings and at the AGM
- When information is available it will be shared with the General Manager
ITEM 6 – UPDATE ON STAGE 3 UPGRADE TECHNICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

1. Lauren Randall provided a status update on the technical and environmental studies.

2. Representative for the Hunter Community Environment Centre queried whether CRG members can get updates on the MEAP studies. Hunter Water advised that the results received to date have been preliminary only and the consultants are currently writing up the draft study reports and an integrated assessment report. The MEAP results will be presented to the CRG in March 2014.

ITEM 7 – PREFERRED TECHNOLOGY FOR RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT SCENARIOS

1. Lauren Randall presented the results of the technology options assessment including Hunter Water’s preferred technology for each receiving environment scenario.

2. Representative for the Hunter Community Environment Centre queried why extending the existing ocean outfall was not an option. Hunter Water clarified that options for extending the outfall have been investigated. Based on the outcomes from environmental studies to date, it is considered unlikely extending the ocean outfall would significantly alter the extent of impacts on the marine environment due to discharges from the Burwood Beach WWTW. The main benefit of an extended outfall would be to reduce the number of events in which diluted effluent could be driven back to the coast, and to increase the dilution in those events that do occur. However, implementing effluent disinfection is a more timely and cost-effective option to mitigate public health risks than extending the ocean outfall.

3. Representative for Merewether National Surf Reserve Committee queried the process of implementing a disinfection project if it may be made redundant by the potential future adoption of membrane bioreactor technology. Hunter Water confirmed that NSW Health expect disinfection to be commissioned as soon as possible.

ITEM 8 – CRITERIA AND WEIGHTINGS FOR RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT OPTIONS ASSESSMENT

1. Jade Herriman of Institute for Sustainable Futures gave a presentation introducing the Multi Criteria Decision Support Framework.

2. A Receiving Environment Options Assessment workshop will be held in April 2014. Representatives from the Environment Protection Authority (EPA), NSW Health, NSW Food Authority and the CRG will be invited to attend this workshop.

3. Outcomes from the Receiving Environment Options Assessment workshop will be considered by Hunter Water’s Board, along with outcomes from the community consultation process, in selecting the preferred long-term effluent and biosolids management strategy for the plant.

4. Lauren Randall presented Hunter Water’s draft criteria.

5. Jade Herriman and Tom Boyle of Institute for Sustainable Futures facilitated a workshop with CRG members to invite feedback on the Receiving Environment Options Assessment criteria and weightings.

Resolved:
1. Outcomes of the workshop on criteria and weightings to be collated by Institute for Sustainable Futures and provided to CRG members.

2. Hunter Water to invite CRG Members to the Receiving Environment Scenario Assessment workshop in April 2014.

ITEM 9 – NEXT STEPS

1. Lauren Randall provided an overview of the next steps in the project, leading to a decision on the preferred long-term effluent and biosolids management strategy for the plant, including planned community consultation activities.

2. Representative for Merewether Surf Life Saving Club queried whether Hunter Water has previously surveyed the community on willingness to pay for environmental benefits. Hunter Water responded that the last survey was approximately in 2007. Community attitudes to environmental issues may have changed since then.

3. Representative for OceanWatch commented that people’s perception will influence their choice of options. Hunter Water advised that information will be made available to the community via the survey process to help ensure community members are able to make an informed choice.

ITEM 10 – UPDATE ON EFFLUENT DISINFECTION PROJECT

Emma Berry gave a verbal update on the status of the Burwood Disinfection Project, to be commissioned in 2016.

ITEM 11 – GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Dr W.E.J Paradice and Mr Brad Warren attended an inspection of Burwood Beach WWTW prior to today’s meeting.

2. A new venue will be confirmed prior to the next meeting.

Resolved:

Hunter Water to determine new meeting venue and advise members.

ITEM 12 – NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 5th March 2014.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 6.05pm.