
Meeting Notes

Meeting Date: 02 June 2010

Time: 7.00pm – 8.45pm

Location: Mt Annan Community Cottage, 351 Welling Drive, Mt Annan

Item	Issue	Action	By
	<p>Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>The Chair welcomed people to the meeting and introductions were made. It was suggested that as the main item of interest for the meeting was the issue of odour, the presentation by WSN and matters arising from this be the main focus of the meeting.</p>		
1	<p>Minutes</p> <p>DW reported that the minutes for November 2009 will be on the website in the coming week. As no members who attended the November meeting were present at the last meeting, these members were contacted and the minutes finalised.</p> <p>It was noted that a quicker process for posting minutes on the website is needed. It was suggested that community members can raise issues with the minutes after they are posted on the website.</p> <p>The minutes for March 2010 were accepted by the meeting without amendment.</p>		
2	<p>Business arising</p> <p>After issues arising from the March meeting, it was felt that an additional site tour was required earlier than is normally held. August 11 was suggested. Another tour could also be conducted later in the year.</p>	<p>Details of the site tour to be held on 11 August be forwarded to CAC members</p>	<p>Id Planni ng</p>
3	<p>Visual presentation</p> <p>A visual presentation delivered to the meeting centred on the operation of facilities and measures being undertaken to reduce odour issues related to the facility.</p> <p>Ken Kanofski, CEO of WSN, spoke to the presentation.</p> <p>He noted that there was a serious issue with the odour performance of the plant. This is taken seriously by the organisation and the CEO. He believes that measures implemented recently along with changed weather conditions have had some impact on odour issues in recent weeks. Short term measures have been implemented while long term technical solutions are being implemented.</p> <p>WSN owns and operates the Macarthur Resource Recovery Park at Narellan and the Camden Soil Mix to which Camden, Campbelltown</p>		

Item	Issue	Action	By
	<p>and Wingecarribee Councils send waste.</p> <p>The four main activities at the Resource Recovery Park are the alternative waste treatment plant with recyclables, green composting, open landfill and closed landfill. If there is an existing odour problem this is impacted by changes in weather conditions such as wind speeds and temperature inversions (warm days and cool nights forming a barrier to air dispersal leading to retention of odour) which increase impacts at this time of year.</p> <p>Odour mapping has indicated the bulk of issues are at the mixed waste processing facility. Methane (odourless), hydrogen sulphide and ammonia are tracked and odour units are measured. The goal is for less than 2 odour units on the site boundary, but there have been occasions recently where this has been exceeded. There were complaints from March to May, spiking on May 16 and 17.</p> <p>Monitoring indicated that there were issues at the tank farm facility. There were some issues related to fresh waste on the landfill but impacts here weren't thought to spread past the boundary.</p> <p>There is currently weekly tracking at the tank farm.</p> <p>The Alternative Waste Treatment is now run closed, but hasn't always been. Front receival doors are now automated and close automatically. The air management system includes air extracted to points where it is injected with ozone which "eats" odour. Ozone levels have been doubled and measurements of air in and out indicate there is now minimal odour outside. All waste stored outside is now covered (temporarily with tarpaulins but coverings will be improved).</p> <p>Other outside odour sources identified at the tank farm are potentially from seven vents. Currently there is a deodorising spray at all these points which reduces these impacts. As a long term solution, WSN is building and installing air extraction hoods at the extraction points. Air will be piped to a scrubber for treatment. This is expected to be completed in July.</p> <p>The evening shift has been shut down till the problem is solved which has halved the capacity of the plant but means less odour generated after 3pm.</p> <p>pH levels have been too high, leading to gas rather than liquid form of ammonia. Currently this is being manually dosed with acid to reduce pH. Measures to improve pH control further are under way. Ammonia removal already occurs on site but needs to be expanded. A new facility for this is being commissioned to double the current capacity. It will take approximately a month to commission the new equipment.</p> <p>There is a storage bunker being built to store residual waste overnight.</p> <p>Technical measures due to be completed by the end of July are expected to substantially address odorous escape from the site and ensure no offensive odours beyond the site boundary, with an</p>		

Item	Issue	Action	By
	<p>additional upgrade by October as an insurance back up.</p> <p>There have been no odour complaints related to recycling.</p> <p>Open landfill odour was thought not to be an ongoing problem beyond the site.</p> <p>With organics, garden waste is composted in enclosed tunnels in a controlled environment. Odour is generated but air is extracted and an air management system with a biofilter is in place. The only source of odour is when doors are opened or when material is loaded into trucks. This is only between 10am and 4pm and could be noticeable dependent on favourable weather conditions.</p> <p>At Camden Soil Mix there is open air composting but with a tight management regime including hours of operation between 10am and 4pm. There is no longer anything other than garden waste (there used to be chicken carcasses).</p> <p>The closed landfill will give off gas for 30-40 years. It has a gas extraction system to remove gas and generate electricity.</p> <p>Occasionally there will be issues as it is an old landfill, not a modern construction, and settlement does occur. WSN doesn't think there are current issues coming from here, but 20 new gas wells are currently under construction and monitoring is ongoing. The environment manager is on site constantly with the ability to shut down drill rig if issues arise.</p> <p>Glass fines are another potential source of odour. These have now been removed.</p> <p>Capturing and treating air is the best solution, but as back up an odour fence is also under construction. This involves a fine mist spray which is weather activated.</p> <p>Questions and discussion</p> <p>AF suggested it was surprising that at this facility WSN seemed to be learning as they went rather than learning from other sites here and overseas. He suggested that while the site was not dissimilar from other sites, the technology was not working here. Why haven't measures at other sites been adopted here?</p> <p>KK replied that the Macarthur site was one of only five of this style in Australia. Odour mitigation had been built in to the design but has been inadequate and needs upgrading. There are odour control systems in place and modelling suggested odour from the tank farm would not get past the boundary and affect houses nearby. This proved not to be right but WSN was putting in place solutions to capture and treat air.</p> <p>KK believes once implemented these will work. The plant is less that</p>		

Item	Issue	Action	By
	<p>one year old and there are design issues with new plants. He thinks these can be fixed with technology.</p> <p>MT believes it took people jumping up and down before WSN reacted, but surely they knew there were problems. Managers and professionals should know that measures such as tarpaulins aren't going to address odour. He thinks WSN has adopted an attitude of close enough is good enough, but they don't have to live here.</p> <p>KK recognised that the plant is not performing as it should. Upgrade work started in November prior to complaints, but some measures have been as a result of complaints. WSN thought issues were under control but they weren't. WSN is saying it is absolutely not good enough and is intent on fixing the problem. There was a focus on getting the new plant up and running, and WSN should have got on top of issues earlier, but is now focused on odour issues.</p> <p>SW outlined the history of community consultation since 1999. He noted three facilities have been the source of odour over the years - Camden Soil Mix, the waste facility and Collins green waste processing. Historically the councils would not approve the waste facility near residential Landcom land releases unless the odour issue could be fixed. He was also under the impression that Camden Soil Mix would cease operation. He understood there was to be no open facility, only closed. Why is there still open landfill?</p> <p>DW noted that she had facilitated community groups over time at which community members asked for reassurance that odour would not be an issue. These were given. It is not acceptable that there are odour issues. There has been a history of odour in these facilities which seems to have spiked.</p> <p>HB suggested that WSN were only aware there was an issue because of the level of community complaints. People are now phoning in complaints because they are fed up. They have to ring morning and night and are asked ridiculous questions about wind direction etc.</p> <p>SW said he has regularly asked council to put the complaints number in their newsletter as people move into and out of the area. He has requested road signs be erected in the main streets with the complaints phone number.</p> <p>GS suggested people email as he received a prompt response to email.</p> <p>LS asked whether the pressure in the tunnel is a negative pressure, and if so does opening doors create an issue. He wonders why doors weren't closed from day one.</p> <p>KK responded it was a negative pressure, but it is moving material that generates odour. Doors needed to be open during construction activities which were taking place alongside operations. The major upgrade would increase the amount of air exchanged and improve the internal work environment.</p> <p>LS asked what odour detection facilities exist at Camden Soil Mix.–</p>		

Item	Issue	Action	By
	<p>KK replied that regular monitoring measures gas and odour here. RM reported that quarterly monitoring here suggests that odour dissipates, but there are similar effects with temperature inversion. LS asked what next, if the community were still receiving odours from here.</p> <p>SR responded that measures being used elsewhere are being brought in here. Turning will be limited during sensitive periods. KK noted each complaint is looked at and mapped and the indication is that the overwhelming number of problems are from the tank farm. He acknowledged the tedious nature of being asked what an odour smells like and wind directions but it helps identify the source of the problem.</p> <p>HB asked whether capacity was an issue, and whether the three week processing period in the tunnel could be speeded up. Would further development in the area will generate problems for the facilities' capacity.</p> <p>SR responded that there may be some scope to speed up processing, but not much. Tunnels are only opened when the waste is decomposed. Capacity is not an issue.</p> <p>KK noted that the facility had been operating at capacity as it had been taking waste from elsewhere. This has been halted while odour issues are worked out with reduced shifts. There is a network of facilities and waste can be transported to others. Over time the facility would reduce amounts taken from elsewhere and concentrate on that generated locally. There was a 15 year contract with the local councils and in the end all waste would be sourced locally.</p> <p>CP commended WSN on actions now being taken, but noted that in 2005 the councils ticked off on the facility under the condition that it be fully enclosed under pressure. It is good this is now being done and it is hoped that this will work. However, the Department of Planning under advice from WSN did not make this a Condition of Consent and instead made it a condition that WSN control the odour. Solutions that have been known about previously are now being implemented. But the NSW Treasurer has announced a timeframe for sale of the facility. What guarantees are there that these issues will be addressed before sale, or post sale by a private company?</p> <p>KK replied that the issues need to be fixed prior to sale and WSN is working hard to do so. This is desirable from a commercial view as well. The prospect of sale increases pressure to fix the problems. It is WSN responsibility. The site operates under an Environmental Protection Licence whether it is owned by WSN or privately. These licences regulate matters such as odour. DECCW has incorporated WSN commitments into the licence and operators can be prosecuted for breaches of licence.</p> <p>JC noted licences regulate all three sites. Licences are being amended to more strictly regulate sites. The licence has already been amended for the new facility and is on the DECCW website.</p>		

Item	Issue	Action	By
	<p>Amendments include restriction of operating hours and other modifications. It includes a pollution reduction program which requires WSN to engage an independent expert to assess the whole site regarding sources of odours and solutions. If some of the solutions are not as effective as hoped, pollution reduction program expert will inform the licence holder of works needed to be undertaken. If the sale goes through the purchaser seeks transfer of the licence. Discussions take place before the transfer to ensure clarity regarding expectations and obligations. All requirements are transferred.</p> <p>HB noted there have been odour problems for 10 years.</p> <p>KK noted there were substantial odours till 2001 from landfill. Since then WSN has invested in gas wells and levels over time had been reduced by the wells. There have been issues with the Collins and CSM composting sites, but since WSN has taken ownership of CSM odours here have been reduced in the last 18 months.</p> <p>HB suggested the last 18 months have been the worst for odours.</p> <p>SW noted the wells had worked in reducing odour, but he thought it not acceptable to allow housing 500m from the tip.</p> <p>CP noted that from 2005 an EPA Condition of Consent was for no odour from the site. He publicly says the EPA has failed the people of Mt Annan. DECCW has failed the people. It is not good enough to say that the conditions of licence are for no odour. DECCW needs to show people what this means. There has been a failure from EPA since 2009. As a good faith gesture WSN needs to show the community what it is doing.</p> <p>AF asked why there are not air locks and double doors for trucks.</p> <p>KK replied that the negative pressure should be strong enough. He doesn't think odour is coming from receival doors, but from the tank farm end doors which were open for long periods while operation and construction were coinciding. The receival doors open and close quickly.</p> <p>MT suggested that by WSN on concentrating on the area of the new facility where they think odours are coming from may be missing other sources of odour, as there has been odour from other areas in the past. He suggested that when the community phones in a complaint it is difficult to be more specific than "it smells putrid".</p> <p>KK responded that monitoring covers all areas of operation. Resources are directed firstly to the worst areas, but ultimately to all areas. WSN doesn't think odour is caused by gas in the landfill but is putting 20 new wells in as a precautionary measure.</p> <p>A community member asked how odour units are calibrated.</p> <p>KK noted odour is measured as well as gas concentrations.</p> <p>RM replied that levels of gas concentrations measured are not harmful to humans, even those working directly on top of it. A nasal ranger sniffer is used by diluting down. It gives a number to odour. All officers using it have had their sense of smell calibrated.</p>	<p>At the next meeting WSN and EPA show how the licence is being implemented</p>	<p>WSN/ DEC CW</p>

Item	Issue	Action	By
	<p>WY noted that mention had been made of the facility being enclosed, but photos indicated it is not all enclosed. Will the system be enclosed?</p> <p>HB asked whether the tendering process had required enclosed.</p> <p>KK noted that not all the facility is enclosed. The tank farm is the site that has the most untreated odour. The tanks are enclosed - meeting planning standards - but have vents. Air from vent points will be captured. The odours from the open sections will now be addressed.</p> <p>GS reported a Camden Council media release noting the State Government opposed an enquiry into the tip. He asked whether the community should lobby the Labor Party.</p> <p>CP noted he had attended the NSW Parliament yesterday to ask the Upper House for an enquiry before sale. The question was asked by the Opposition on May 13 but the Government doesn't support an enquiry. The coalition supports the enquiry and support from the cross benches needs to be gained. A number of issues should be addressed including why the facility is not fully enclosed and why the EPA has not enforced Conditions of Consent.</p> <p>A community member was happy to hear that chicken carcasses are no longer taken by CSM, but asked whether any animal product goes into the mix.</p> <p>SB responded that chicken, duck and horse manure is used in blending.</p> <p>A community member indicated that while he was pleased to hear that systems are being put in place, with potential growth in the area how will long term impacts e.g. in 30 years be addressed? Will future generations need to keep going over the same ground?</p> <p>WSN took on notice the question of long term impacts and how these may be addressed.</p> <p>DW suggested that as the main focus of the meeting was the presentation from WSN and discussion around this, and following agenda items had largely been covered in discussion, that the following items be covered with reports being distributed to members. She suggested the next meeting to include a response from WSN regarding potential long term impacts on the area and how the issue of waste would be addressed with planned growth for the area; suggestions for improving the complaints process; an update regarding progress of current works; current licence arrangements and where to from here should ownership change.</p> <p>GT asked whether there would be ongoing funding, including for plans for extra staff to address issued raised tonight.</p> <p>KK responded that spending to address the odour issue was approved immediately the issue was recognised. Odour management is critical to the business. Adequate resources exist to do whatever is required to address the issues.</p> <p>HB asked about arrangements for the shutdown over Easter.</p>	<p>WSN response to potential long term impacts - population growth and waste.</p> <p>Id planning to include items on next agenda</p>	<p>WSN</p> <p>Id Planning</p>

Item	Issue	Action	By
	<p>KK replied that waste wasn't being processed, but the tank farm continues to operate as it is a biological process. There is a 24/7 roster for the tank farm.</p> <p>HB reported that she felt she hadn't been taken seriously when WSN staff visited her after she reported an odour issue, as the odour had dissipated by the time staff arrived.</p> <p>DW reiterated that community members complaints be treated with respect.</p>		
	<p>SW asked about the process for publicising the complaints number. KK noted a flyer was being updated. He would take on notice the question of how to publicise the phone number.</p>	WSN – publicising the complaints line phone number	WSN
4	<p>Update on Operational and Environmental Matters This was deferred to the July meeting; a copy of the report will be issued with the notes.</p>	Id Planning to issue report with draft notes	IdPIg
5	<p>Community Feedback on Odours This was discussed under Item 3</p>		
6	<p>Camden Soil Mix Update This was disused under Item 3</p>		
7	<p>Actions Review of actions from last meeting</p>		
8	<p>General Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nil 		
	<p>Meeting Closure DW thanked community members for attending the meeting. The meeting closed at 8.45pm. Next meeting to be held in July – date to be advised.</p>		

Agenda Item	Action summary		
2	Details of the site tour to be held on 11 August be forwarded to CAC members	Id Planning	
3	At the next meeting WSN and EPA show how the licence is being implemented	WSN/DECCW	Next meeting
3	WSN to take on notice and provide a response at the next meeting to the question of addressing potential long term impacts in relation to population growth and waste.	WSN	Next meeting
3	The following items be included on the agenda for the next meeting: addressing long term population growth regarding waste management; update on works progress; complaints procedures improvements; and current licence arrangements and potential ownership change	Id Planning	Next meeting
3	WSN to respond at the next meeting as to how to publicise the complaints line phone number	WSN	Next meeting

4	O & E report to be issued with July draft notes	Id Planning	June
---	---	-------------	------

Next meeting:

July 7 at 7 pm

Venue: Mt Annan Community Cottage, 351 Welling Dr Mt Annan