

Date: 1 September 2021

Time: 3:30 pm – 4.45 pm

Location: Via Microsoft Teams

Attendees: Tony Robinson (ERR) Gary Davis (WPA) (VP)
Jaselyn OSullivan (ERR) Brendan Bartlett (WPA) (Secretary)
Helena Dixon (ERR) Glenys Hall (WPA) (Member of WPA)
Jessica Ireland (office manager at Jacinta Allan's office)

Apologies: Rachel Mclver (ERR), Jacinta Allan (Local Member), Malcolm Hall (WPA)

Meeting open:

1. Welcome
2. Tony Robinson introduction
 - Leading abandoned mine rehabilitation program for Victoria, including the former Kralcopic sites in Bendigo
3. Introductions from everyone

ERR Update:

ERR:

Everyone should have received a copy of the Woodvale dust report. We can have further discussions in the coming weeks if people have further points to discuss.

Today we will update on what has happened and what will happen across the site

Community comments on the report:

Brief look so far. Want to note the comment that arsenic is most likely from multiple sources. But also the spikes are close to the top of pond 7 which is known to have to highest concentration. Not unexpected. It is consistent with past results. Problem hasn't dramatically increased nor gone away. Also noting the monitoring was during a mild summer.

Keen to talk about the program and what is happening next.

Is the report live?

ERR: It is going live.

Action:

- Jaselyn will notify when it goes live, along with a website update.
- organise a site meeting when COVID restrictions allow.

Community question: Your view on the report?

ERR: At the moment results indicating that it's not looking like one point of dust. Only first two quarters of the year. For us to get good understanding and determine dust sources - need to see at least a whole year of data.

EPA has reviewed; they are comfortable the report reflects what the data means. The report is a starting point to see whether the dust suppression is working and where controls are needed.

Current status of the ponds:

Ponds 1, 2, and 3 – keeping water levels up. Discussions with Coliban water to ensure we have access to water. Also organising with Coliban to run a test on the pipeline to make sure it is reliable during the summer.

Peter Panozzo is working for ERR now, he is maintaining the sites and will be maintaining the water levels, so we have water over the ponds in summer. We feel this is adequate control until we are ready to rehabilitate - which will involve controlled drying of the ponds.

Pond 6 was partially cleaned. It still needs controls for dust suppression. We will be applying some type of polymer to suppress dust until rehabilitation works are conducted.

Pond 7 is partially controlled by vegetation. It will be useful to show in person as part of a site visit. Bays 1, 2 and 3 have elevated arsenic levels. They are vegetated. Polymer will be applied, if necessary.

Currently we are working through the areas that need polymer or other suitable dust suppression applied. Our desire is to discuss with you about the strategies we are implementing before getting past spring into the drier seasons for dust.

Monitoring:

We're installing additional background monitors for both Woodvale and Kangaroo Flat. This will help determine if the dust is coming from the ponds or another source.

Community question: What about the monitor in Raywood?

ERR: It has not been active for a few years. The background monitors will be going back somewhere around Raywood.

The report looks at Woodvale Ponds from a dust point of view and an arsenic point of view. The levels there are ok when just talking about dust. With arsenic the data we are getting is arsenic dust fall out. The indication is that levels are on average below 100 mg/kg, which is the safe level in soil in residential area. Woodvale background is averaging around 20 mg/kg. Positive from our point of view. Indicates that bays 1-3 of pond 7 are not impacting too much, the vegetation is doing its job, but we're looking at more vegetation or other dust controls.

We will do additional monitoring when we get to the earthworks (next year) with more continuous monitoring. Until then we will continue with the fallout meters and the dust suppression strategy.

Community question: Timeline on the earthworks? Can core samples in that paddock be removed now?

ERR: We have been meeting with GSV who run the core library Victoria about removing the core and expect that core could be removed by Christmas.

Community question: Happy about the use of dust data to proactively develop dust suppression strategies. Would the continuous monitoring mean people visiting properties daily?

ERR: The monitoring will be on the border inside of the site. Also we are aiming to get directional gauges at the east and the west of the ponds soon, so we can get directional data for east-west.

Community question: Concern on limits of the bond amount and if that would delay necessary works?

ERR: We've already working toward additional funding from the Government. We don't expect funds to be a limitation on doing proper monitoring and rehabilitation.

Community question: Who currently owns the title of the land? Is there any more information on what will happen to the land once rehabilitation is complete?

ERR: It is crown land and DELWP is the crown land manager. There is an agreement between DELWP and ERR-DJPR that we are to maintain the site until it's rehabilitated. It is up to DELWP to decide what to do with the site at the end of the rehabilitation. The, not yet confirmed, plan is to rehabilitate it to grazing/farmland. It will then likely be sold to whoever wants to farm/own it.

Bendigo Groundwater Project is talking about keeping pond 1-3 until 2023 whilst they organise a long-term strategy. We've asked the question to DELWP on how long they want access to the ponds, with an answer likely after November 2021. DELWP has actively got consultants looking into it.

ERR has gone to market for Kangaroo Flat and assessing tender for an auditor. For Woodvale, we are very close to putting it out to tender. We are expecting to have answer on the auditor in approximately a month.

There are 3 elements that the auditor will focus on:

1. the level of arsenic and salt contamination
2. the level of soil on which vegetation can grow on (comparable to neighbouring sites)
3. Where any contaminated material is placed. (options include landfill, onsite burial)

Community point of view that burying onsite is not wanted.

ERR: There is attraction to it going to landfill. An auditor will investigate the options to understand the cost and environmental management point of view.

We need to investigate landfill and onsite and have a report outlining advantages and disadvantages of each to present to government to explain our reasoning for choosing one.

Next steps:

- September/October; get an auditor on board
- October/November; work with the auditor on the elements above
- November/December; engage a consultant to design a rehabilitation program.

Noting that we will not doing works in summer due to dust risk. The works will start next year.

Community question: Will the community get a say in what options for the contaminated soil disposal?

ERR: There will be a chance to discuss with us, we would make it clear to government what the community's preference is.

Next meeting?

ERR: Have a preference to have an onsite meeting as soon as possible, if regional Victoria eases earlier then we will organise an onsite meeting with Peter, with the option of Tony beaming in online.

Also organise a meeting when the next quarter report is done by the end of October/early November. This is in addition to a site visit.

Action: Jaselyn to set up an early November meeting and a mid-December meeting. Frequency of every couple of months. We'll also alter if a significant milestone occurs.

Community comment: Overall concern – that an external body will determine the end use of the site with no consultation of the Woodvale community.

ERR: To clarify ERR want to confirm the end use with DELWP before we start rehabilitating. First step was asking council if they are planning to rezone that land – they said no. We have a high degree of confidence that this site will stay rural.

We are working with DELWP to confirm that the end use will be farmland, we can't start works until we confirm that land use. We can see if DELWP representative can come to one of the next Woodvale meetings to discuss this process.

Meeting concluded 4:45 pm