

Port Augusta Community Reference Working Group Meeting Notes

Meeting Number	5
Date	Thursday 7 September 2017 at 5:30pm, The Standpipe Hotel, Afghan Room
Attendees	Peter Georganis (CEO, Flinders Power), Kym Maule (Flinders Power), Brian Reichelt, Brett Prentis, Dan van Holst Pelican (State MP for Stuart), Michelle Coles, Robin Sharp, John Miller, John Banks (Port Augusta City Council)
Facilitator/Executive support	Steve Dangerfield (communicate), Henry Rasheed (communicate)
Visitors	Sarah Murphy (Tonkin), Andrew Solomon (EPA), Andrew Manson (Department of Premier and Cabinet)
Apologies	Chris Kennett (Housing SA), Robin Harkin (DECD), Ros McCrae (Country Health SA Local Health Network), Brad Williams (Flinders Power), Emily Alchin (Centacare)

1. Welcome and introduction

Steve opened the meeting at 5.30pm and welcomed the visitors for the meeting and noted the apologies (refer attendee list above).

2. Acceptance of minutes from meetings 3 and 4 and terms of reference

Minutes

Steve received a confirmation from the room of the change in minutes for meeting 3.

Steve also received confirmation from the room of the minutes for meeting 4.

Both sets of minutes will now be published on the Flinders Power website.

Terms of Reference

Steve pointed out the amendments that had been made since being spotted in meeting 4 and received confirmation from the group. These Terms of Reference would now be considered final and uploaded to the Flinders Power website.

Actions from last meeting

Steve ran through the action items from meeting 4 as follows:

- Minutes from meeting 3 and 4 now resolved and finalized
- Terms of Reference – amendments made and finalized
- New air quality arrangements have been resolved between Flinders Power and the EPA and notification distributed to the group
- Status of the air quality monitoring at Stirling North investigated and new location identified and agreed – members invited to view new location
- Tonkin report had been distributed to all members of the group
- Site tour to be considered for reference Group members – hold over until meeting 6 in September

3. Community Open Day – response

Steve asked the room for thoughts/comments/feedback from the day.

The response from the room was that it was a great day and people were given an opportunity to see what was happening. The following thoughts were expressed:

- “Everyone thought it was fantastic”
- “We (the general community) all now have confidence in you as people and as an organisation”
- “A perception within the community has been changed, we’re no longer challenging you. Just interested to see what is next.”

Flinders Power asked whether such an event should be held again. The general feeling was that there was significant merit in holding such an event but that it should be tied to a key milestone when there was further progress.

There were three main benefits that were noted:

- People were welcomed to have a look on sight demonstrating an openness and transparency
- Provided an opportunity to be able to see the progress that has been made to cover the Ash Storage Area
- An opportunity to observe and understand the scale and complexity of the job and the difficulties and challenges being managed

Two additional ideas were raised for future consideration:

- Promoting the opportunity for community interest groups to book in a suitable time to tour the site

- An event of some description for former employees, which would involve site tour and project update.

4. Project update (Peter Georgaris)

Peter provided an update on McMahon's work on the ash storage area, the fifth of seven charge felling events (demolition of the Turbine Hall Turbo Generator Ring Beam), transport of scrap metal to Port Pirie, site contamination assessment works and the completion of key environmental protection order obligations.

A question was raised on the capping on the Playford A area – Peter confirmed that a gravel material is being used.

A question was raised about the risk of a significant rain event washing away the top soil on the ash storage area. It was noted that while this was a potential risk in the short term, the site had been prepared in such a way so as to mitigate this risk (depth of cover, drainage) together with the seeding process, which was expected to take effect and bind the soil. The site is expected to work in the same way as the surrounding area outside of the Power Station site.

A question was raised about the use of the land in the future and who would be responsible for monitoring the site performance relative to the environmental standards and expectations. It was stated that this would be a subject for negotiation with the eventual land purchaser but that it was expected that any such responsibility for ongoing monitoring would travel with the land holding to the new owner.

In this context however it should be noted that Flinders Power were responsible for remediating the site to standards set by the EPA relative to the zoning of the land – and that their work must be signed off by the independent auditor before Flinders Power could receive the site from the Government to on-sell.

Clarification was sought regarding the various land titles. Peter explained to the room that there were 4 land titles:

1. North East section – also known as the railway loop
2. Playford A and B stations
3. Northern section

4. Coastal protection zone

Sundrop Farms have an easement only accessing the waterfront and do not have any ownership over the land.

5. Air quality monitoring – update and actions from last meeting

A brief summary was given regarding the Stirling North Air Quality monitor and the new location and the new arrangements in place with the EPA that had been circulated to the group prior to the meeting. Members expressed satisfaction with the new location for the Stirling North Air Quality Monitor at the Stirling North Primary School.

6. Bird Lake – Tonkin Report and discussion

Sarah Murphy from Tonkin gave an overview of the Tonkin report into Bird Lake.

The work had involved background research, sediment characterisation (including site investigations), vegetation baseline study and storm water investigation.

Key findings of the study included:

- The source of the odour was identified as decomposing cyanobacteria mats which are predominantly exposed around the lake fringes
- A thick layer of salt crust likely exists in deeper parts of the lake, covering the mats and therefore stopping the odour coming from deeper parts of the lake
- The water quality is not contributing to the odour
- Sediments are expected to be self-neutralising, therefore they don't pose a risk to human health however if disturbed could create an odour

The Tonkin study also included consideration of rehabilitation options for the lake as follows:

- Do nothing
- Return to 'near natural' state
- Retain permanent lake through seawater pumping
- Complete backfill to create natural land
- Partial backfill to create useable land
- Removal of odour causing material

It was recommended to return the lake to 'near natural' state through:

- Capping of cyanobacteria mat with fill material
- Vegetation of fill areas to create buffer zone
- Retain thick salt crust in deeper areas of lake
- Management of storm water to promote drying of lake to replicate natural conditions

A question was raised over the amount of water in the lake being purely from rainwater, as there was a belief that there must be another source of water impacting the lake due to the low rainfall received in the region. The likely source it was considered could be from rising ground water, or seepage from beneath the ash dam.

Rainfall was considered the primary reason there was still some water coverage. However the flow of ground water from the Ash Dam site to Bird Lake remains in question.

It was raised that the Tonkin report said that there needs to be a minimum of 200mm of cover while there was only 150mm used on the ash storage area. Is there any reason for the difference? The EPA said that they would take this on notice, but assumed that there might be slightly different needs as the two sites are quite different in characteristic.

It was observed that the Tonkin report stated that vegetation was not growing on the embankments of the Ash Storage area. The EPA confirmed that there is in some locations and that this might need to be clarified.

With respect to the option to cover the lake with soil, this does create a significant challenge from an operational perspective. Given the instability of the surface, it will be difficult to get machinery out to the lake centre. Working from the embankments will be possible, but the centre could pose a difficulty. Tonkin had allowed a contingency within the potential cost estimate, but this might need further assessment.

Members raised the need to land on a solution as a matter of urgency – that the community could not be expected to endure another summer with the odour. At a minimum, a strategy and implementation with secure funding was needed.

Council said that they had been working with Government to seek funding support to resolve the issue as it was beyond the ability of the community to pay

for a solution for something of such a scale.

In reviewing the options, a re-flooding option was discussed. The amount of water needed however, was considered to be in the order of 1,666 megalitres per year. It was agreed that this option is uneconomic and therefore not worth exploring.

A concern over the success of returning the lake to near natural state was raised, as this would be a waste of money without knowing if it was going to work. It was suggested that more research might be needed before implementing this option.

A trial was proposed as an idea to ascertain whether the recommended 'near natural' rehabilitation solution was possible and to help understand the risks and firm up the total cost of the project.

An offsite trial could also assist, to allow the 'near natural' solution to be tested in isolation. It was considered prudent to try to understand as best as possible the effectiveness of the 'near natural solution' and whether access to some parts of the lake were possible.

It was acknowledged that the Council was not in a position to undertake such trials and that any additional steps would potentially delay the implementation of a solution. However, it was also acknowledged that this needed to be balanced against understanding the risks.

With respect to Flinders Power's role, Peter explained that his organization was willing to provide Council and State Government with any necessary support to help find a solution. However, Flinders Power are a stakeholder and site neighbor and do not have any responsibility to determine and implement a solution. Water from the power station when it was operating was provided as a means of solving a pre-existing problem that was not created by the power station or its operation. Now that the power station had ceased to operate, a permanent solution was needed. Responsibility to find and implement this solution is not the responsibility of Flinders Power. However, Council expressed that this was not their view and expressed that Flinders Power do have a responsibility over Bird Lake.

Steve requested that the group give consideration to the next steps, acknowledging that community expectation was that something would be done to prevent odour from the lake during the forth-coming summer.

Council emphasized the need for action – that a lot of work funded by Council had occurred to date and that while a further more detailed understanding of the risks might be needed this should not delay the provision of adequate funding.

The point was made that SA Government agencies have been investigating funding options, as it is acknowledged that while managing Bird Lake is a Council responsibility, neither the Council nor ratepayers more directly have the financial capacity to implement a solution of the scale proposed in the Tonkin report.

It was identified that McMahon Services, being on-site for Flinders Power, may be in a good position to provide some idea of potential costs and associated risks if approached. Flying a drone over the lake for example may assist a company like McMahon's to make a determination and provide some advice.

While this was seen as a possible action, concerns were raised by Council about the additional time that might be incurred and resultant delays to securing funding. Council also identified that they did not have the resources to facilitate this additional investigation and enquiry with McMahon Services.

Some discussion ensued with various solutions and ideas being tabled as to how a more accurate cost estimate could be achieved to provide confidence that the identified risks in the Tonkin report could be managed.

Following this discussion, the group accepted the following:

- It is the community's expectation that a plan is developed and implemented this summer and that significant steps are taken to demonstrate that the issue of odour and rehabilitation of the lake is being seriously
- That the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Council work together to fast track a funding request to SA Government and that the two parties make a determination as to what level of information or certainty SA Government will require with respect to risk management and contingency funding
- That an update be provided at the next meeting of the Reference Group

7. Sea Wall – review of material and Robin Sharp

To be discussed as the first agenda item at the next meeting. Members to make themselves familiar with the material circulated from Robin Sharp.

8. Other business

The progress on the coal stockpile was summarised:

- Planted and irrigated
- Good growth on some of it
- Middle area (lower lying) is where water has pooled and more seed will be added to this section as the area dries out

8. Next steps and meeting close

Next meeting will be in approximately 4 weeks time; Steve will set a date and advise the reference group accordingly.

Steve thanked the group and closed the meeting at 8:15pm.

Actions

Item	Action	Who	When
1	Sea walls to be discussed as the first agenda item next meeting	Steve Dangerfield	Next meeting
2	DPC and Council to liaise together to fast track a funding request to Government and determine what level of additional information might be needed to support that request.	John Banks and Andrew Manson	Next meeting
3	Collation and preservation of historical items to be discussed at next meeting	All members	Next meeting
4	Future charge felling activities and community events to be discussed	Brad Williams	Next meeting
5	Terms of reference and minutes from meetings 3 and 4 to be uploaded to Flinders Power website	Brad Williams	Before next meeting