

# Woodlawn Eco-Precinct Community Liaison Committee Meeting Minutes

<b>Date</b>	Thursday 30 May 2024	<b>Time</b>	5:00pm to 7.00pm
<b>Coordinator</b>	Justin Houghton, Site Manager, Woodlawn Eco Precinct	<b>Location</b>	Tarago Hall

### Committee List ✓

Name	Present	Name	Present
Justin Houghton (JH) (Veolia)	✓	Dr Samantha Johnson (SJ) (Community Rep)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cr Andy Wood (AW) (GMC Councillor)	✓	Lois Wake (TADPAI)	✓
Fiona Jeffery (FJ) (Community Rep)	✓		✓
Cr John Preston (JP) (QPRC Councillor)	✓		
Kym Wake (KW) (Community Rep)	✓		

### Visitors List ✓

Name	Present	Name	Present
Scott Martin (SM) (GMC Director Planning & Environment) - Invited Visitor		Kathryn Whitfield (KLW) (Veolia ARC Project Director)	
Raymond Choy (RC) (Veolia Environment Manager)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jamie Seaton (JS) (CLC Facilitator)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carmen Loecherer (CL) (GM NSW Resource Recovery)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lee Smith (LS) (Veolia Project Team)	
Keith Smith (Goulburn Ratepayers and Residents Association)	<input type="checkbox"/>		

### Minutes

**1 Introduction and welcome**

Acknowledgement of Country

JS opened with an Acknowledgement of Country and CLC members were welcomed to the CLC meeting.

CLC Chairperson company/career background

- In early career JS worked in Government (local councils and later Transport for NSW in Grafton, NSW). In later years worked in various consultancies in Sydney delivering communications and community engagement services.
- Joined Element Environment Pty Ltd about 6.5 years ago and was made redundant from his role (Principal Consultant) at the company on 1 May, 2024.
- Subsequently, JS started Social Aspect Consulting Pty Ltd, a company he owns and of which he is Director. JS' wife is an employee of the company and has a background in local Government. There are no other employees.
- JS declared he has no commercial agreement or interest in Veolia, nor does any relative of his.
- Responses to queries from community about potential conflicts of interest and compliance with the CLC Charter:
  - 1) Significant provider of goods and services: this does not to JS given his minor involvement with Veolia. The current role equates to around 14 hours of work (2 days) every 2 months, plus time travelling to and participating in the CLC meetings themselves. This is not a significant part of JS' overall work commitments.
  - 2) Long standing relationship suggestion: irrelevant as this is only JS' second role with Veolia. JS was engaged to fulfill the CLC Chairperson role at short notice prior to CLC meeting #16. This was at the instruction of his previous employer who established the commercial agreement with Veolia.
- FJ: There is another aspect of the question received from the community that needs to be addressed. That is, the involvement of JS in the work Element Environment Pty Ltd conducted for Veolia in the past and authoring reports for its business. What are those projects and reports?
- JS: I fulfilled the role of "technical reviewer" of a social impact assessment report written by an ex-colleague at Element Environment Pty Ltd. That report contains the results of the assessment related to the Veolia Revesby Quarantine Facility and was completed in October 2023. That is the only work I have completed for Veolia aside from my involvement in CLC meeting #16. The nature of my work in consultancies involves seeking and delivering short, discrete projects for a range of clients. Accordingly, I have completed work for many companies in a wide range of sectors, including for competitors of Veolia in the waste sector. Much of my work is available online as the social impact assessment framework in NSW requires assessment reports to be publicly exhibited.
- SJ: Can you elaborate on what delivering a social impact assessment involves? What qualifications required and what tasks do you undertake?

- JS: I have a Human Geography PhD qualification which provided me with training in social research methods. In NSW under the Department of Planning, Housing and Industry environmental impact assessment framework, a social impact assessment is essentially a specialist study which supports a development application being undertaken by a company. An example I use is when you build a house you prepare a development application (DA) that goes to local council for determination. In NSW where a project is classified as being a State Significant Development according to the relevant legislation, the DA takes the form of an environmental impact statement (EIS) and a subset of that development application is a social impact assessment. It entails an assessment of the project's potential impacts on people.
- KW: The CLC meetings have been difficult to run in the past and there have been challenges with administration. Jamie's work in the Chairperson role would assist the CLC.
- SJ: Agreed that facilitating and administering the CLC is in need of improvement.

**2 Apologies**

- Scott Martin
- Lee Smith
- Kathryn Whitfield
- Wayne Baynham (WB) (Community Rep)
- Mark Quinlan (MQ) (Community Rep)

JS: Note Keith Smith is a visiting observer in attendance. He is affiliated with the Goulburn Ratepayers and Residents Association and is a Goulburn Councillor candidate at the next election.

**3 Actions from previous meeting**

- 1) Amend welcome to country: this was updated in the previous presentation and preserved in the current presentation (CLOSED)
- 2) Communicate how many leaking containers have been reported as non-compliances: JH confirmed 3 out of 28,000 per annum. (CLOSED)
- 3) Correct date in the water management diagram (i.e to correct year -2024): this was updated in the previous presentation. (CLOSED)
- 4) Bar chart colours on slide 20 need to be corrected: this was updated in the previous presentation. (CLOSED)
- 5) Review risk rating rise reported in the Tarago Times and confirm accuracy: Veolia acknowledged and apologised for the erroneous information being published. (CLOSED)
- 6) Seek to identify past traffic study that identified the number of trucks using various roads in the LGA. **ACTION: RC to provide link to ARC study (OPEN: find the link [here](#))**
- 7) Confirm if Veolia tracks the origin of waste it receives: JH confirmed it does not. (CLOSED)

4 Eco-Precinct Operational Update

Operations presentation

ARC Slide

- CL delivered operations presentation - ARC slide
- LW: Q3 of the financial year or calendar year?
- CL: Calendar year.
- SJ: What does the consultants team consist of and what do they do?
- CL: We have project team that engages specialists, in this case EMM Consulting, who are contracted to deliver a specialist scope of work on site.
- SJ: Who are these people and what qualifications do they have?
- RC: The consultants might possess a range of qualifications and certifications which are required in their profession. For example, Scott Fishwick, the listed author of the ARC AQIA, is the air quality scientist from EMM Consulting who has relevant certifications for the nature of work he does.
- SJ: It is valuable for knowing the expertise of people, it is the most important thing in some cases.
- FJ: What did the Department ask for additional information about?
- **CL: QoN. ACTION: Determine details about the information request.**
- SJ: Regarding the gap analysis, can you explain why it is not normal to release that information prior to gap analysis conclusion?
- RC: There is a submission to the Department and live application is underway. It is a formal process and it is unusual for some of the information about RFIs or clarifications between parties to occur with a running commentary. Any updated studies or plans for applications are generally made public when finalised or determined.
- SJ: I think it is important to clarify that the gap analysis does not relate to problems on-site. It's merely a Government run process.
- FJ: The issue is more about the timeframe; that it takes 2 years. This is a long time considering Veolia has so many of these facilities overseas.
- RC: KW said it in the last CLC meeting that being a new process in NSW contributes to the process timeframe.
- KW: Isn't it the case of saying that Veolia is in a process and at the conclusion there will be an outcome provided? Do we need visibility of the process?
- CL: Overseas operations have many differences, and are set in different cultures including where EFW is established already.
- AW: We do want to see "how the sausage is being made". We've been in this position for a long time.
- FJ: Yes, there is a lot of anxiety in the community in relation to this issue and people have been waiting for an answer for a long time.

- KW: We need to get clarity about it.
- SJ: Do we need a NSW EPA representative to attend a meeting and respond about the process of the ARC assessment?
- RC: We can review that request. **ACTION: RC to consider request for NSW government representatives to attend and explain ARC assessment process.**

#### Operations presentation (JH)

- KW: is there any odour when you use evaporative sprays?
- RC: An air quality specialist third party consultant, The Odour Unit, checks the water's chemical properties for its odourless potential and they also smell it themselves. Last year odour was chemically identified as high but it was not consistent with the actual experience.
- KW: Does the mine next door contribute to odour?
- RC: There is potential for that but more nuanced data is required. Some tailings dams do produce hydrogen sulphide in abnormal conditions, for example via sulfur reducing bacterias.
- RC: Yesterday's data collection with vacuum gas canisters is predicted to be reliable due to weather patterns and associated report is to be developed.
- SJ: The process that is underway is valuable for the community to know.
- RC: If there are concerning properties they will be highlighted alongside the results in the report and here
- SJ: Yes but the meaning of the results need to be shared, the technical information needs to be interpreted.
- FJ: Veolia reports the odour is not hazardous to human health, but it does impact upon our health (e.g. FJ was physically sick as a result). Odour is localised. For example, yesterday it was strong on the hill coming down into Tarago along Lumley Road, but then minimal at the Showgrounds.
- JH: We're not denying it's us. With all the work we have done the odour itself won't necessarily change straight away. We will see a reduction in the frequency and how long it may linger before we see more significant improvements.
- LW: Does global warming influence the likelihood of odour?
- JH/CL: It is worse in wet weather but like with many of the impacts from climate change, it is difficult to ascertain either way.
- SJ: Will the EPA approval of the tarp take a long time?
- RC: Not likely based on similar scenarios elsewhere.
- SJ: That topic should be reported in the next Tarago Times edition as an example of what's being done.
- CL: Odour reports are very important. We have to present them regularly to the Veolia CEO. We take

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complaints very seriously.

- FJ: It took 30 minutes to report a complaint to Veolia. It's the same time required via the NSW EPA. No one can wait 30 minutes to lodge a complaint.
- CL: Veolia needs to get better at that.

Environment presentation (RC)

- FJ: Is there a proposal to change from MBT to FOGO?
- RC: No, we make WOO (Waste Organic Outputs) from red bin waste there and FOGO already.
- JH: Currently we have approval to process both MBT waste and FOGO waste at the facility. The FOGO modification is to extend the shed we are currently using to process FOGO to help with process efficiency. Basically the current shed is too small to process the volume effectively.
- JP: Is the EPA the consent authority for dams?
- RC: No, it's NSW DPE.
  
- RC: Located FOGO operations on a map in the presentation.
- FJ: So there is no change to the FOGO unit or increase in treatment?
- RC: No, just a shed extension.
  
- FJ: How would a container develop a crack?
- JH: There is a small airlock door on the front of the container and this needs to be opened when the waste is being tipped. Sometimes this door can blow closed and this means that when the waste is discharged from the container it can suck the container in. We then push the roof back out and reinforce it but sometimes a rusty line can develop along the crease and over time a crack can develop. We have removed all containers with damaged roofs.

**5 Community Q&A**

Community Q&A process

- JS: Can we start by talking about the process instead of sequentially going through the questions on the list?
- LW: We need a structured question format in a public template that everyone can see and contribute to.
- KW: Lodged a form on the Veolia website and did not receive a reply.
- JS: The list of questions raised at meetings and collected between meetings is disproportionate to the amount of time dedicated to them in the standing agenda. It is impossible to address them all at the meeting.
- RC: We need to categorise them as they come in and address them in a consolidated public document, as we feel it is unfair for so many questions to be published uncategorised when people wanting information on a certain thing need to sort through multiple documents.
- SJ: There is an issue of communication. Research shows that webforms are unhelpful. In the CLC

meetings the questions are very repetitive and answering them is not always feasible.

- CL: We need to develop a template to categorise issues.
- SJ: What does it matter if not all the questions are answered? Does it matter?
- FJ: Yes there are a large number of odour questions so it is important that we can ask questions and obtain answers about this topic in particular.
- SJ: Context is important too. A local business owner (name deidentified) said people don't want to stop at her shop because the odour is strong.
- JP: There needs to be a technical aspect to this. It needs to be sophisticated, for example, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software which enables you to filter the questions.
- FJ: I am happy to collate questions and pass them on. It is our role to do this for the community. Some people want to be anonymous. A list of reasons why community members felt anonymity was valuable is included in the community questions.
- SJ: If you want to be anonymous then maybe the questions should not be asked. You should be willing to put your name against it.
- JP: Suggested this was a neuro-typical response to the issue of anonymity.
- JP: An off the shelf CRM is the best solution here.
- SJ: We don't have time for all these questions identified in these lists to be answered in a meeting.
- FJ: The CLC meetings need to be more frequent to achieve that.
- KW: There are plenty of communications channels available.
- RC: We can review whether key information about Odour can be published more regularly, and which mechanism would best achieve that.

#### Presentation content

- JH: The current presentation format does not answer questions and we know 90% are about odour. We are happy to change the format to have a quick summary of operations and spend more time on issues such as odour management. The quantity of odour complaints is irrelevant to us from an operational point of view, a single report triggers the same process on site as multiple reports, we take them all seriously and use them to identify improvements.
- KW: The local business owner (name deidentified) has made comment on Facebook and discussed the problems impacting her. Can you talk to her directly?
- CL: We can talk to her but reactivity is difficult when reports come through from EPA weeks after the event. As we have always open and willing to work with the community.
- SJ: What if the smell is not Veolia, could it sometimes be septic trucks?
- FJ: It's very distinct and obvious it's Veolia.
- JH: We are not hiding from this and we would assume most of the time it is from site.
- SJ: It would be valuable to call-in and respond in-person to complainants - it demonstrates you're listening, caring, and responsive.

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- CL: We are hiring a stakeholder engagement manager to be based in Canberra. That will improve our in-person response.
- JS: Can we commit to a solution now? For example, a Google form, CRM, or web form on the Veolia site?
- CL: Veolia commits to providing options for the next CLC meeting. **ACTION: Veolia to investigate and nominate options for next meeting.**
- FJ: Uploading information onto the website and making people search for it isn't adequate. It needs to be provided to people directly.
- CL: People should be given options and nominate their preferences.
- SJ: Communications research says recall of online information is less compared to short-length written material. Less is more.
- KW: not one size fits all
- AW: There needs to be regular communication and people are given an option to nominate their preferred channels. There needs to be more regular information flow for people wanting to hear good news stories as well.

### Community questions

- FJ: Community have asked for a working group to be formed to resolve the question about gas processing, in particular the difference between what is being flared and what goes through the engines.
- RC: The response is that Veolia must catch as much gas as possible and run through the engines first and any residue is put through the flare.
- JP: What is the problem they [the community] are trying to resolve via this question? Why do they want to know the gas breakdown?
- JH: We have the licensed permission to treat gas through flare or engine.
- FJ: The perception is that Veolia does not have as many engines as it said it would.
- JH: We are currently in a transition where we have enough gas for our 7 engines and an extra amount for a flare. The problem is this extra amount is not consistent enough to install another engine. As the volumes build up we will have enough for more engines but not right now.
- RC: This is a perception I think that is answered in the original EIS for the expansion in 2013, which identified additional engines compared to what we have now, specifically at the point of peak gas generation and the landfill is not full yet.
- JS: What does Veolia say in response to the request for a working group?
- LW: I think we need the question of 'why' answered.
- JH: The 'why' is important. I am not sure why this particular process is so important to some people. It seems like there is something more to this question that we are not being asked?
- FJ: If Veolia can give a breakdown of the percentage it would save the query.

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- RC: The question was previously answered. It is commercial information that Veolia does not agree to release.
- FJ: If Veolia can't give a rough percentage how can the question be answered at all?
- JH: We have all this information, we just don't see how it is relevant.
- LW: There can be some commercial information that Veolia must be able to keep private.
- RC: That is correct.
  
- JS: Is there an opportunity for the community members to visit site?
- RC: Yes that can be arranged.
- KW: The CLC Charter allows for a working group within the membership to be formed, it is not intended for external people.
- RC: They can come to site to observe the gas operations. Standing from the car park, it can be seen that the engines are all running but not all the flares.
- FJ: Justin's explanation might be enough for now (insufficient gas for extra engines).

## 6 CLC Function and Charter

### Start – Stop – Continue Survey results

- JS presented survey results. 4 people completed the survey and responses reflected many of the issues raised in the current CLC meeting.

### CLC Charter

- JP: Regarding the CLC Charter, it was created not long ago so it's too early to renew it.
- SJ: The current charter is fine.
- KW: Current charter was last amended July 2022 and in the main is OK, with the exception of a few minor tweaks to make the Charter represent how the committee is currently being managed.

### Presentation content

- KW: Regarding the performance measures in the presentation, can we have traffic lights added?
- RC/JH: Yes these can be added **ACTION: add traffic lights to presentation.**
- JP: Agree there is too much detail, suggest we only discuss items by exception.
- JH: Happy to summarise operational outcomes and focus on issues like odour, what we are doing and what is the expected change. **ACTION: Change the format of the presentation to summarise operations and focus on current issues i.e. what Veolia is doing, what will be the results, and when.**

### CLC administration

- SJ emailed JS noting publication of minutes only required two weeks prior to the upcoming CLC meeting as per Charter.

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- FJ: Regarding minutes, their publication 2 weeks prior to the next CLC meeting (per the CLC Charter) is not timely and defeats the purpose of Community Q&A. Is Veolia still OK with publishing minutes two weeks after each CLC meeting as previously agreed?
- RC: Yes, 2 weeks is achievable excluding responses to the community questions.
- FJ: Let's just stick to two weeks.
- JP: Who reads the minutes?
- JS: This meeting cycle KW, FJ and Veolia representatives reviewed and responded to draft minutes review request.
- JH: If we can change the format of the presentation to address the issues we understand the community want to know like odour management then hopefully we will get less questions going forward.

**Other business**

- JS thanked KW for his service on the committee, members agreed. His resignation is accepted.
- JP asked what Veolia is doing in the community regarding education. FJ/JS responded that the previous meeting minutes provided a description of Veolia's community programs.

<b>7</b>	<b>Meeting Closed</b>
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Meeting closed at 7pm. Next meeting date to be confirmed by chair via email.

**Action List**

Item	Action	Assigned to
1	ACTION: RC to provide link to ARC study stating the quantity of Veolia trucks using road network. (CLOSED – click <b>here</b> )	Veolia
2	ACTION: CL to determine details about NSW EPA additional information request.	Veolia
3	ACTION: Veolia to consider request for NSW government representatives to attend and explain ARC assessment process. Veolia notes that the community is able to contact EPA/DPE directly with any requests for information about their processes or area visits.	Veolia
4	ACTION: CL to investigate and nominate Community Q&A interface options and present at the next CLC meeting.	Veolia
5	ACTION: RC/JH top add traffic lights to presentation to illustrate compliance.	Veolia
6	ACTION: Change the format of the presentation to summarise operations and focus on current issues i.e. what Veolia is doing, what will be the results, and when.	Veolia