



Community dialogue - meeting #8

Hi-Quality – Bulla Spoils Facility

Meeting details

Date: 7 September 2021, 5.00pm to 5.45pm

Venue: Online (via Zoom)

Attendees:

Community representatives:

- Anthony White – Controller, Sunbury SES
- Chris O’Neill – No Toxic Soil Campaign
- Graham Williams – Sunbury Residents Association
- Heather Dodd – Local resident
- Michael Osborne – Sunbury Business Association

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- Lance Ingrams – Regional Manager, Victoria
- Amy Watson – Partner (Forge Communications)

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- Todd Beavis - Principal (facilitator)

Purpose

The meeting was held as a check-in with community representatives following the online briefing held on Thursday 2 September.



Key points of discussion

- The meeting was opened by Graham, noting that he had hoped everyone had the chance to read his email sent earlier that afternoon providing feedback on behalf of the Sunbury Residents Association (SRA). It was noted that other community representees had also provided feedback by email.
- Graham reiterated the main concerns raised in his email including:
 - The lead time limited the ability to promote the briefing and likely impacted attendance
 - That the presentations were too long, and not enough time was left to answer questions from the community
 - The session was not interactive enough, with people not being able to see who was online, see the questions that were asked and use the chat function
 - Overall, the community was disappointed with the lack of interactivity and time spent answering questions, particularly when compared with the recent Big Build Public Forum.
- He advised that the SRA has received direct feedback that it appeared to be a 'setup job' to tick a box, rather than a genuine effort to engage the community, and some criticism about SRA's role in organising it.
- Other community representatives shared Graham's concerns, noting that it was underwhelming and a missed opportunity, with it being very one way and lacking transparency.
- A number of community representatives shared their frustration that they had supported the briefing in the hope that it would prove to be a positive step forward for the community and that it had fallen far short of expectations.
- They also noted that this had led them to question, and be questioned, about their role in promoting the briefing on the Community Dialogue more generally.
- The relatively low attendance (around 70 people) at the briefing was discussed, with the lack of promotion once again being raised as a possible reason. Questions were asked about whether this represented the level of concern in the community, or if people are generally too busy or have more pressing concerns, particularly given how hard the community has been impacted by COVID. Some community representatives shared that they had asked people they know about attending the briefing and were disappointed that they had not seemed more interested.
- Questions were then raised about some of the information presented, in particular some of the data presented by AECOM, questioning their independence given they are being paid by Transurban. Todd asked that any specific questions be sent in writing for a response.
- Discussion then turned to next steps with the community representatives presenting strong views that more needed to be done by all parties to respond to community concerns, including:
 - Providing more information about the safety of Bulla Bridge and that it was not acceptable for parties to keep 'passing the buck'
 - The community deserve the respect of all project parties to front up and answer questions about the project, including the CPB John Holland Joint Venture (JV) and VicRoads.
- It was noted that there is increasing frustration in the community and that action will be taken to force the parties to face the community if this is not done in the near future.
- One of the participants shared that they don't know where to go anymore in trying to hold the state government accountable for the project and that, while they appreciate the efforts of Hi-Quality in running the dialogue and responding to questions, that the community is not getting the answers they deserve.

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- Reflecting on the concerns raised, Hi-Quality representatives accepted that while there were lessons learnt for future sessions, that the briefing had addressed many of the questions raised by the community as agreed with the members of the dialogue. It was noted that this briefing had been designed to focus on key concerns about the project, that is the level of PFAS contamination and how this will be managed. Once again (as discussed at previous meetings), Hi-Quality advised that future briefings would address other concerns, such as transport and traffic, with presentations from other project parties.
- Todd thanked the participants for their feedback and acknowledged the difficult position they are in, given the concerns raised about the online briefing, asking if there was anything that Hi-Quality could do to assist.
- Following some discussion, the community representatives agreed the following requests:
 - That Hi-Quality provide a statement to the participants that could be shared online confirming the commitment to provide written responses to all questions submitted prior to and at the briefing within 14 days of the briefing
 - That future sessions address the concerns raised about the briefing, providing a more interactive experience and a genuine opportunity for the community to have their questions answered
 - That other project parties, including the State Government and the JV, engage directly with the community and answer questions.
- Hi-Quality advised that there has already been a number of discussions with other project parties about future community engagement activities and that the group should be reassured that their voices are being heard.

Agreed actions

- Hi-Quality to provide the statement as requested and to pass on the groups concerns and requests to the other project parties.

Next meeting

- It was agreed that the next meeting would be held in late September, pending the availability of project parties to attend.