



Community dialogue - meeting #3

Hi-Quality - West Gate Tunnel Proposal

Meeting details

Date: 17 June 2021, 5.00pm to 6.30pm

Venue: Online (via Zoom)

Attendees:

Community representatives:

- Anthony White - Controller, Sunbury SES
- Chris O'Neill - Not 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

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- Todd Beavis - Principal (facilitator)

Purpose

The meeting was held to continue the dialogue between Hi-Quality and community representatives in relation to the proposal to collect, treat and dispose of material excavated by the tunnel boring machines on the West Gate Tunnel Project.

The primary purpose of the meeting was to continue to work with the community representatives to better understand and respond to community concerns. More broadly, the community dialogue provides the opportunity for Hi-Quality representatives to meet with members of the community to provide an update on the proposal, answer questions, and improve engagement and communication with the community.



Agenda

The key items for discussion were:

- Actions from last meeting
- Update on the proposal
- Community engagement
- Questions
- Preference for future meetings.

Key points of discussion

- Information shared since the last meeting, including the notes of the last meeting and responses to questions from the No Toxic Soil campaign Facebook group, were discussed. Representatives were asked if the information was useful and if it was shared with their groups. The general view was that the information was helpful, though more detail could be provided in response to some questions.
- At this stage, community representatives had not broadly shared the information provided with their respective groups, advising they would do so following the meeting.
- It was noted that there seemed to be conflicting information in the public sphere as to whether PFAS was contained in the soil, as well as the water coming from the tunnel boring machines.
- This led to questions from representatives around the number and location of boring holes used to test the material along the tunnel alignment.
- Hi-Quality representatives advised they would be happy to provide further information where possible, with input from project partners, and requested points that need clarifying and further questions further questions be sent through for response.
- Hi-Quality advised that the West Gate Tunnel Project and the logistics contractor, who would be managing the transport of the material from the tunnel, will have primary accountability for briefing and training the SES, CFA and FRV should Hi-Quality be selected as the preferred site. Hi-Quality acknowledged that while primary accountability sits with the Project, they had an important role to play and advised they would work closely with these parties to ensure emergency services had the training and information they need to respond to any emergency.
- Further communication and engagement activities were discussed. Hi-Quality representatives noted the range of existing engagement channels (including briefings, the online engagement platform, phone line and regular project updates) were available but were not being used to their full potential.
- The group was taken through the functionality of the online engagement platform, including the new conversation tool (available under the 'Talk to us' tab) requested at the last meeting.
- The group agreed that more effort should be made by all parties to communicate and share existing engagement channels, as this would go some way to addressing community concerns about the lack of engagement. It was also noted that Hi-Quality would need to increase communication and engagement activities if it was selected.
- The recent appointment of internationally renowned expert on environmental contamination as Victoria's new Chief Environmental Scientist was discussed at length. Community representatives are hopeful that

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Professor Mark Patrick Taylor's appointment, particularly with his focus on the management of PFAS, would be good for the community. It was noted however, that key decisions about the future of the project would still largely be driven by the State Government.

- Hi-Quality representatives welcomed Professor Taylor's appointment, noting that if his appointment gave the community greater confidence in the handling of PFAS this would be a positive outcome for all concerned.
- Hi-Quality was asked whether it had awarded a contract for preparatory works. This followed advice provided to a community representative by a company who had submitted a tender to Hi-Quality, that it was recruiting to build a facility for Hi-Quality related to the proposal. Hi-Quality representatives advised that it had not awarded any contracts and that it would not do so unless Bulla was selected as the preferred site. It was noted that it was normal practice on major infrastructure projects for subcontractors to advertise roles to test the market and prepare for the potential award of a major contract.
- Major elements of the construction process were discussed, including the water treatment plant, cell construction and processing area. Hi-Quality advised that if it was selected as the preferred site, it would take a minimum of six months to build the major elements of the facility.

Agreed actions

- Hi-Quality to request further information from the West Gate Tunnel Project about the number and location of the test boring holes along the alignment of the tunnel.
- Community representatives to share available communication and engagement channels with their networks and to encourage the community to use them.
- Hi-Quality to provide an update at the next meeting on usage to see if additional communication had led to greater use of the engagement channels.
- Future meetings to be held online and the invitation to be extended to Josh Bull, MP for Sunbury, and project partners.

Next meeting

It is proposed that the next meeting will be held on Tuesday 13 July.