




Botany Mill Community Liaison Group

Date & Time	26 th November 2024, 6:00pm – 7:30pm
Location	Botany Mill
Attendees	Peter Fagan (PF), Lynda Newnam (LN), Kerri Baldwin (KB), Karen Jones (KJ)
Apologies	Charles Abela (CA), Gerry O'Connell (GO), John Viselli (JV)
Meeting purpose	To liaise with community members on topics relating to the operation of Botany Paper Mill

#	Item	Notes/Action	Leader
1	<i>Welcome and Apologies</i>		Karen Jones
2	<i>Actions from previous meeting</i>	<p>ACTION: KJ to contact Anil from RCC after the annual shutdown to invite the RCC Sustainability team to a Mill tour.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anil said the Council team would reach out to the mill once they resolve the service agreement negotiations for a tour. 	Karen Jones
3	<i>Mill Projects Update</i>	<p>No capital works projects currently underway.</p> <p>Waste improvement project – no change since last meeting, still under cost review as costs have increased significantly since the CAPEX was approved.</p>	Karen Jones
4	<i>Overview of main site issues</i>	<p>On Saturday October 26th there was a fire in the wastepaper yard baled storage area. Fire & Rescue NSW (FRNSW) were called and attended site and brought the fire under control.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opal personnel conducted doorknocking of the closest residential neighbours to the wastepaper yard in Partanna Ave and Murrabin Ave on the Saturday afternoon. There was no damage to equipment or process infrastructure. The focus of the week following the fire was to process each bale of wastepaper that was in the fire-impacted area through the plant, as pulping these bales removes the fire risk of the material. NSWFR worked with Opal team members to do this in a systematic, efficient and low-risk way. FRNSW handed the site back to Opal on Friday 1st November 2024 with instructions to process the remaining fire-affected paper bales, which was completed on Sunday November 10th. The root cause of the fire is unknown but most likely due to contamination from a small battery or similar, as it started in the middle of a storage bay. There were no activities going on in the storage area at the time, so it was not due to mobile equipment interaction or any other yard activities. A fire consultant has been engaged to give recommendations on how to improve the storage of baled wastepaper in the storage bay areas to reduce the fire risk. Batteries causing fires in waste facilities and waste transport all over Australia. Particularly lithium batteries. <p>During a discussion with GO after the meeting he said that a few neighbours had asked him about the fire on the Saturday afternoon, and he had reassured them that the wastepaper yard was concrete, and that the fire canons in the wastepaper yard are</p>	Karen Jones

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		<p>designed to contain any fires within it, so the threat to properties outside Opal was minimal.</p> <p>KJ asked the group for any suggestions on how Opal could improve their communication with the community regarding the fire incident.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PF suggested that in the future the CLG group should get an email from Opal without having to ask for it. • LN suggested leaving a note at houses during door knocking if they aren't home. <p>The Mill has been performing well since last meeting. Record production month in July – 41,243 tonnes of paper produced.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LN asked whether that would put the mill over the Development consent limit of 500,000 Tonnes annual production. • KB stated that the mill is still well within the limit and is forecast to produce around 450,000 Tonnes this year. <p>Botany Mill has had a good year in terms of profitability. One of the biggest challenges in 2024 has been securing OCC (old corrugated cardboard - wastepaper) volume as export pricing increases. Wastepaper prices looks like they are slowly coming down, which is good news. Another challenge is how much of our OCC volume can we secure in NSW, rather than transporting in from other states.</p> <p>The site is in the final stages of budget setting for 2025, and next year B9 is budgeted to make the same tonnes as this year. There continues to be a drive towards light weighting (lower grammages) for lighter cardboard boxes by customers.</p> <p>PF asked how many months of the year does the plant run?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KB answered that we run continuously throughout the year, but normally have one 24-hour shut per month for maintenance tasks, as well as a wash shut for around 8 hours. Once per year we have an MSD (major shut down) for around 5 days to complete larger maintenance jobs. • The mill can also be asked by AEMO (Australian Energy Market Operator) to shut down on days when there is extremely high demand on the electricity grid to ensure power stays on to the community. If they ask the mill to shut down, it will be for between 6-12 hours at a time and often in the afternoon/evening. This is a rare occurrence and did not happen at all in the last year. The mill is compensated by AEMO for the loss of production during this time. 	Kerri Baldwin															
5	Contacts Review	<p><u>Community Contacts & Complaints</u> (29/07/2024 – 26/11/2024)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>To EPA</th> <th>Mill Hotline</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Odour</td> <td>28</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Noise</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td>4</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>14</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The EPA has received 28 odour complaints regarding the mill since the last meeting. 2 at the end of July, 7 in August, 18 in September and 7 in October.</p> <p>Most of the complaints were from Moorina Ave (15 complaints), with several from Partanna Ave and a few from Chifley. Most describe a sour chemical odour, with a few for rotten eggs/sewer odour and a burning odour. A number of complainants are also reporting headaches and a burning sensation in the nose and throat.</p> <p>There was one emergency release of biogas for 6 minutes in September, and this coincided with one of the odour complaints for rotten eggs.</p>	Category	To EPA	Mill Hotline	Odour	28	4	Noise	0	0	Other	4	1	Total	14	2	Karen Jones
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		<p>LN suggested the EPA be asked to facilitate a hybrid community “workshop” on odour concerns with the EPA, Opal, RCC staff and odour consultant in attendance.</p> <p>During a discussion with GO after the meeting, he commented that he had not noticed any foul odours since the last meeting, and had not had any comments from neighbours or family members regarding odours from the mill.</p> <p>The EPA also received four complaints regarding the fire in October and the mill received one complaint for litter in a neighbouring business. The mill is organising for a cleaner to regularly attend the industrial units on the corner of our property to check for litter and remove any they find.</p>	
6	<p><i>Odour Strategy Update</i></p>	<p>As discussed during previous meetings, the Decanter building was found to be the most significant source of the mill’s odour impacts in the residential area, contributing approximately 40% of the maximum odour impact. Botany Mill invested over \$600,000 on odour reduction equipment consisting of a biotrickling and carbon filter which was commissioned earlier in the year.</p>  <p>Air is pulled from the trailers in the decanter building upward through the biological media, where the microorganisms metabolise the majority of the odorous compounds. Following the biological system, the air passes through a carbon filter, where the activated carbon media adsorbs the remainder of the odorous compounds from the air.</p> <p>Testing of the exhaust air from the decanter building in late August 2024 shows a 98% decrease compared with the same testing in 2021.</p> <p>With the increase in odour complaints during the second half of 2024, biocide dosing was increased as an interim measure, and an odour consultant was engaged to review the recent complaints and conduct residential odour surveys during September.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing of the process pulp and water streams throughout the plant during the second half of 2024 have resulted in very low VFA results (volatile fatty acids – which have odours such as vinegar, body odour, solvent, rancid butter and vomit), as well as very low sulfides, with zero sulfides in the feed pulp to the paper machine since the end of September. • The odour consultant has not been able to identify any onsite processes that would generate a “chemical” smell, nor one that would result in a burning sensation to the nose and/or throat. • The surveys were conducted on three separate days, during westerly winds. They found some wet paper odours that were considered potentially offensive in Purcell Park due to their intensity (distinct to strong for a duration exceeding 30 seconds), but the intensity and frequency of these odours were lower in the residential housing areas and were therefore not classifiable as offensive in those areas. The chemical odours, including solvents and disinfectants, that were detected off-site were not found on the Opal premises or the adjacent light industrial premises to the east of the mill. 	Karen Jones

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		<p>A community newsletter was sent to the nearest 1000 residences in October giving them information on the decanter building odour reduction unit, and also asking people to call the mill hotline if they have concerns or questions about odour or any other environment issue.</p> <p>A further set of odour sampling and testing of other site process emission sources will be taken during December, and the site is continuing to work on improving former exhaust flowrates to increase dispersion of the wet paper odours.</p> <p>LN suggested inviting south ward councilors to the CLG meeting.</p>	
7	General Business	<p>Purcell Park Flora sign</p> <p>A sign has been installed in Purcell Park providing information on the endangered Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub and local flora examples.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;">  <p>Purcell Park contains a locally rare example of a remnant population of Woody Pears and other remnant species from the former Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub (ESBS), an endangered ecological community.</p> <p>Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub (ESBS) in the Sydney Basin Region are listed as an endangered ecological community consisting of shrubs, small trees, heaths, small areas of woodland and wetland vegetation. It had once occupied 5300 hectares of land between North Head and Botany Bay, it is now reduced to less than 1% of its original area and currently exists as remaining remnants around Randwick, Botany Bay, Manly, Waverley, Sutherland Shire, and the Royal National Park.</p> <p>ESBS is a remnant of the vegetation occurring on the exposed continental shelf 18,000 years ago when the sea level was 120 meters lower during the Last Glacial Maximum.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>WOODY PEARS</p> <p><i>Xylomelum pyriforme</i> Sydney First language: <i>courroo</i></p> <p>Woody Pears, <i>Xylomelum pyriforme</i> derived its name from Greek <i>Xylon</i> and <i>melon</i> meaning wood and fruit tree, and Latin <i>pyrus forma</i> representing pear-shaped.</p> </div> <div style="width: 45%; text-align: center;">  <p>Woody pears are part of the Proteaceae family, the same family as the waratah, grevillea and banksia, and grow near or in coastal New South Wales, stretching from the mid-north coast to Cooma.</p> <p>Some Aboriginal uses of this plant include roasting seeds for consumption and has medicinal benefits such as using the leaves and bark for pain relief.</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>SMOOTH-BARKED APPLE</p> <p><i>Angophora costata</i> Sydney First language: <i>kajimbourra</i></p> <p>This species inspired Sir Joseph Bank to call this large group of trees, including eucalypts, gum trees because of its red sap or gum and is commonly referred to as the Sydney Red Gum.</p> </div> <div style="width: 45%; text-align: center;">  <p>These trees provided the Darug Peoples with numerous resources. The bulges on the trunk could be cut and hollowed out to make bowls. The red gum can be used as an adhesive, a sweet lolly, a toothache remedy or applied directly to sores, cuts and bites. The gum can also be boiled in water and used as an antiseptic wash or consumed in dilute and small amounts to help treat diarrhoea.</p> </div> </div> </div>	Karen Jones

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		<p><u>Sponsorship</u></p> <p>Opal is a Silver sponsor of the Matraville Christmas Carols in Barwon Park for 2024.</p> <p><u>General Business</u></p> <p>LN stated that at the recent Orica community meeting they were told the excess water from the groundwater treatment plant has been going into Long Dam since Qenos shut down, and that it could have been up to 5 ML/day.</p>	
8	<i>Conclusion</i>	Next meeting – March/April 2025	
9	<i>Actions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider inviting South Ward councillors as well as other RCC representatives to next CLG meeting.• KJ to continue to contact Anil from RCC to invite the RCC Sustainability team to a Mill tour.	