

Botany Mill Community Liaison Group

Date & Time	2 nd December 2025, 5:30pm – 7:20pm
Location	Botany Mill
Attendees	Lynda Newnam (LN), Kerri Baldwin (KB), Karen Jones (KJ)
Invitees	Charles Abela (CA)
Apologies	John Viselli (JV), Peter Fagan (PF), Gerry O'Connell (GO), Jun Wu (JW)
Meeting purpose	To liaise with community members on topics relating to the operation of Botany Paper Mill

#	Item	Notes/Action	Leader
1	Welcome and Apologies		Karen Jones
2	Actions from previous meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Send charter to EPA for their review - KJ. COMPLETE. EPA did not review, but thanked Opal for sending them the document.Determine whether the site should invite Matt Thistlethwaite to site for a presentation of projects on energy reduction and sustainability – KJ/KB will look at doing this in New Year.	Karen Jones
3	Fire Incident	<p>On Friday September 25th a fire broke out in the wastepaper yard at Botany Mill. It started in the loose wastepaper pile and with the high winds of the afternoon, spread to the baled storage area. It is unclear what started the fire but is most likely to be a lithium battery or similar.</p> <p>The site enacted its incident response plan to manage the fire prior to the arrival of local fire crews who contained the fire.</p> <p>The health, safety and welfare of our team members and the community are our highest priority. We are pleased to confirm that no employees were injured in the incident, and there has been no damage to our equipment as a result of the fire. Unfortunately, several vehicles parked in the neighbouring Ausgrid easement were damaged.</p> <p>A fire consultant has been engaged to look at further fire risk mitigation options in addition to those that were identified after the 2024 fire.</p>	
4	Mill Projects Update	<p>No capital works projects currently underway.</p> <p>Solid waste improvement project – no change since last meeting, project is currently with Opal Corporate for review as costs have increased significantly since the CAPEX was approved. The mill continues to run trials to reassess reject sorters to recover fibre and reduce moisture content to enable potential for alternatives to landfill.</p> <p>As part of our Net Zero roadmap a boiler burner management system upgrade project has been approved. The aim of this project is to improve the efficiencies of the boilers and will therefore reduce natural gas usage and greenhouse gas emissions. It will also allow for future use of different gases (eg hydrogen). Installation on the first boiler has been slightly delayed, with work starting early in the new year.</p>	Karen Jones

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5	Overview of main site issues	<p>September was a challenging month for B9. Prior to the fire on 26 September, production had already been impacted by technical failures, resulting in four lost production days spread across the month. These issues caused a shortfall of approximately 6,000 tons and contributed to elevated waste paper inventory levels at the time of the fire.</p> <p>Performance in October and November has improved significantly, with production aligned to targeted volumes. Currently, B9 is 8,600 tonnes behind budget, but we expect to reduce this deficit to around 6,650 tonnes, delivering 441,000 tonnes for the full year.</p> <p>Looking ahead to 2026, the plan is to produce 448,000 tonnes on B9, with a major shutdown scheduled for the last week of April. The duration is yet to be confirmed, but seven days have been allocated in the plan.</p> <p>Both domestic and export market conditions remain challenging. Opal continues to focus on increasing domestic sales through our vertically integrated business model while developing long-term supply partnerships with existing and new customers.</p> <p>Finally, the Enterprise Agreement for B9 Operators has been finalised, voted on, and ratified by the Fair Work Commission.</p>	Kerri Baldwin															
6	Contacts Review	<p>Community Contacts & Complaints (26/08/2025 – 01/12/2025)</p> <table><tr><th>Category</th><th>To EPA</th><th>Mill</th></tr><tr><td>Odour</td><td>1</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>Noise</td><td>0</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>Other</td><td>1</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>2</td><td>8</td></tr></table> <p>The EPA has received 1 odour complaint since the last meeting, and the mill has also received 4 complaints. Two in August, one in September and one in November. The EPA conducted odour surveys in the local area and reported sour cardboard odours in September and November.</p> <p>Two complaints in August and one in September were from Chifley, one from Partanna Ave in September, and one in November for wet cardboard from Australia Ave.</p> <p>Of the five other complaints, four related to the fire, and one was a local business concern over the level of wastepaper stored on site.</p> <p>Odour complaints in the 2025 has decreased significantly, with 16 complaints so far, compared with 52 last year.</p>	Category	To EPA	Mill	Odour	1	4	Noise	0	0	Other	1	4	Total	2	8	Karen Jones
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		<p style="text-align: center;">Odour Complaints to Mill and EPA 2019-2025</p> <p>The chart displays monthly odour complaint counts. The highest peak is in late 2021, followed by a period of lower activity. A significant increase is seen in mid-2024, with another peak in mid-2025.</p>	
7	<i>Odour Strategy Update</i>	<p>An alternative biocide treatment was trialled at the mill from March until the end of September. The biocide helps the mill continue to recycle large amounts of water by keeping the bacteria and algae growth low, similar to the chemistry added to keep swimming pools fresh. The biocide has now been reverted back to the original supplier to determine if any changes we saw are reversed with the return to the original chemistry, and also give the original supplier an opportunity to make any adjustments that they may find improves results and cost effectiveness.</p> <p>At the last meeting we reported that while odour testing in June had shown a reduction in odour concentration from 5 of the 6 sources, sulfur gas results had shown an increase due to the chemistry of the alternate biocide. Further sulfur gas testing done in October showed significant reductions on the June levels.</p> <p>Odour testing was also done on the decanter building and odour reduction unit. Test results show that while the odour concentration results were higher than 2024 levels, they are still an 87% reduction on the 2021 results.</p>	Karen Jones
8	<i>General Business</i>	<p><u>Sponsorship</u></p> <p>Matrville Chamber of Commerce for sponsorship of the Matrville Carols in Barwon Park.</p> <p><u>General Business</u></p> <p>Opal has released it's 2024 Sustainability report, detailing sustainability initiatives across the business. The link to the report has been sent out to this group and is available on the Opal website.</p> <p>Opal is also part of the Jemena's "Fuel for Thought" docuseries on YouTube. It looks at using biogas in place of natural gas for renewable energy production.</p> <p>LN raised Randwick Resilience Strategy and asked if Opal was going to make a submission.</p>	Karen Jones
9	<i>Conclusion</i>	Next meeting – March 2026	
	<i>Actions</i>	No new actions	