

Port Botany CCC

Agenda

Meeting #42

Date: Tuesday 13 February 2024

Time: 5:30pm – 7:00pm

Location: Online via Zoom

Attendees	
Community Members Charles Abela (CA) Peter Fagan (PF) Paul Pickering (PP) Patrick Medway (PM) John Burgess (JB)	NSW EPA Erin Barker (EB)
Local Government Bronwyn Englaro – Randwick City Council (BE)	Port Authority of NSW Nerida Green (NG)
Members of Parliament	NSW Ports Bryan Beudeker (BB) Jon Stewart (JST)
Business Representatives	Roberta Ryan – Independent Chairperson (RR) Isa Crossland Stone – Minute taker (ICS)
	Apologies Karen Jones – Opal (KJ) Jonathan Lafforgue (JL) Sharon Mitchell – Bayside Council (SM) Natalie Cerda - Patrick (NC) Mark Walker – Genos (MW)

Agenda Items

Commencement

1. Welcome, apologies and introductions

RR welcomes all attendees to the first meeting of 2024. She welcomes all new attendees and invites JST to make his introduction to the group.

JST introduces himself; he is General Manager of Strategy and Corporate Affairs at NSW Ports. JST explains the Brooke Eggleton (BE), who was Corporate Affairs Manager and Pip Harley (PH), Sustainability Manager, have both resigned from NSW Ports to take up new opportunities at other organisations.

JST explains that NSW Ports is currently in the process of recruiting for both roles, and when BE's position is filled, the new Corporate Affairs Manager will join the NSW Ports CCC as a regular representative.

Matters arising

There are no matters arising from previous minutes, aside from the subjects of the presentations later in the meeting.

Presentations

1. NSW Ports noise abatement strategy – BB

BB shares an update on the NSW Ports noise management strategy.

There are no specific questions or discussion points arising from this presentation. RR thanks BB for his thorough update.

2. Eco Ports certification overview – BB

PP asks BB if the ferry at Kurnell is considered in the Eco Ports certification process.

BB says it isn't. NSW Ports has specific performance targets in its sustainability strategy which are focused exclusively on the activities of NSW Ports.

The community representatives thank BB for his efforts in preparing and delivering his two presentations. They were both highly informative.

Business Representatives Updates

1. DP World update – SE/JH

SE and JH were not present at the meeting and did not provide an update offline.

2. Patrick update – NC

NC was not present at the meeting and did not provide an update offline.

3. Hutchison Ports update – JS/GP

JS and GP were not present at the meeting and did not provide an update offline.

4. Vopak update – AB

AB was not present at the meeting and did not provide an update offline.

5. Elgas update – CD

CD was not present at the meeting and did not provide an update offline.

6. Qenos update – MW

MW is an apology and sends an update that Qenos Hydrocarbon Storage has continued to operate normally since last meeting.

7. Port Authority of NSW update – NG

NG provides the following updates from the asset maintenance team.

- Reflective cat eyes have been installed at the boat ramp to provide better visibility.
- The disabled bathroom door has been cut at the top and the bottom to ensure that no one will be locked in, as was the case late last year.
- All bathroom locks have been replaced.
- All faded signage has been replaced.
- Car park lines have been repainted.

NG says now that this basic maintenance has taken place, she will be able to report on the next tranche of work at the next CCC meeting.

8. NSW Ports update – JST

Import container volumes in the last 3 months (both import and export) has declined.

Additionally, there has been prolonged protected industrial action undertaken by MUA workers at the DP World terminal. This has significantly impacted the terminal's productivity. It has forced an increase through Patrick's and Hutchison Ports terminal, which limited the number of containers each vessel could exchange. Subsequently, in November and December, there was a reduction in the volume of empty containers that could be evacuated.

JST explains that the new empty container park developments/expansions at the end of 2023 have afforded the ports additional empty container capacity, which meant that the ports were able to operate into January despite build-up of empty containers. The ports have now achieved a normal equilibrium after a recent surge in empty container export.

JST updates that DP World and their MUA employees have reached an in-principal agreement on their enterprise agreement. Therefore, protected industrial action has been halted. The agreement will go to vote with MUA, and if successfully approved, new enterprise agreement will exist for 4 years.

JST reminds the group of the NSW Ports Community Grants Program, which typically launches in March and is awarded in June. He urges community members present tonight to encourage community groups in their networks to apply via the website.

RR asks JST to contact ICS and RR when the grant applications become available. The community members of this group are very well-connected and have been helpful with propelling this initiative in previous years.

JST will send RR information when it becomes available. **ACTION.**

JB asks about the cost of importing a 20-foot container from Asia of Europe.

JST says it is currently above the low point of last year, and generally sit around \$200-300 range..He adds that conflict surrounding Yemen at present has created minimal delays in movement of trade or spikes in pricing.

9. Opal Update – KJ

There is no update from KJ, who is an apology.

10. Ampol Update – JK

JK was not present at the meeting and did not provide an update offline.

Government/Community Member Updates

1. Randwick City Council update – BE

BE says that the Council is doing a study of the Matraville Town Centre. They are conscious of the noise that may impact development both in and around the town centre, so they are looking at the data from the 2021 noise study that was done. They would like any data from NSW Ports regarding noise issues in the Matraville Town Centre and will be following up.

JB says that he was at a Randwick Councilor briefing meeting with the Maroubra Precinct Committee last night. The NSW government has announced a number of mandatory changes to the planning and development structure around hubs, import rail, transport corridors, etc to increase housing numbers. These changes will have implications

for Council's own urban planning regulations eg the government's minimum land size for subdivision will be set at 450sq metres whereas Council's minimum is 550 sqm (was 800sqm until recently). If Council is obligated to adopt the 450sqm policy then it can be expected there will be a concentration of much higher-density residential development in the area particularly around the port. JB will find out more by the end of the week.

BE says that the Greater Sydney Urban Plan is coming out in April. They might occur as State Significant Development (SSD), which would mean that anybody can make a submission, and the Council will not be more influential than any other submitters. This is why the council is looking at what town centres will be impacted by this, and which are more sensitive. They hope to get an exemption for these identified sensitive areas.

2. Bayside Council update – SM

SM is an apology and there are no updates from Bayside Council.

3. EPA update – EB

EB says there is no update from the EPA and they currently have nothing on exhibition.

4. Community member updates

JB tells the group that he is still trying to get to the bottom of the ongoing issue of exposed Ausgrid cables. JB says that the issue has been escalated to the ministerial level, but it has not yet been successful or reached a satisfying resolution. It appears to JB that there is no certainty about whether the cables are still exposed, which is, of course, potentially a major safety issue.

JB raises the matter of seagrass at Botany Bay. He says that one of the offset requirements of the Kamay Wharf and ferry project involves reinstating seagrasses in the bay. JB has tried to follow up this offset requirement and has recently received news that no seagrass replanting will take place on the northern side of Botany Bay, but rather only at Kurnell, which in JB's view is odd given that very little sea grass now exists on the northern side of the bay whereas there are good stocks of sea grass on the southside including Kurnell..

JB has done significant night time spotlighting/scouting of the shallow waters front from LaPerouse to the Mill Pond stream outlet. He did this 3 times over the school holiday period. Throughout these outings, which took about 20 hours in total, he reports that he did not see any prawns, crabs, squid or other sea life, which is highly concerning given that these species were once very much prevalent.

JB says that he has reviewed all of the papers from the Port Authority website. In this process, he has found that the last monitoring on seagrass was done in 2020. JB mentioned that in 2002 there was more than 100000 sq metres of seagrass along Foreshore beach but this declined dramatically with the Port construction - this situation worsened with the subsequent port expansion. Sea grasses were temporarily removed and relocated to Towra during the construction works and eventually restored onto Foreshore beach but very little of the sea grass survived. Based on the 2020 monitoring report there was less than 1000 sqm of sea grass left along Foreshore beach despite groins being installed to minimise erosion/turbidity and the ongoing burial of sea grass meadows with sand.

JB says that the 2020 report recommended ongoing monitoring of the seagrass but this has not occurred. The responsibility for monitoring historically has sat with the Port Authority (PA). JB also mentioned that shore bird monitoring discontinued in 2018 and there is little evidence to show that the sanctuary is actually attracting birdlife. JB stated that seagrass and bird monitoring was a condition of consent for the Port expansion and acknowledged that monitoring was required for only 2 years post construction completion but acknowledged that the PA did agree to extend this time line for another 2 years. JB recommended that the PA consider reinstatement of both monitoring activities given the questionable state of sea grass volumes and the effectiveness of the bird sanctuary..

RR asks NG to follow this issue of seagrass and shore bird monitoring at the PA and suggests that JB and NG speak offline about the process. **ACTION.**

PP notes the sewer overflow beside the Sydney Airport.

JB says that it does still overflow, but it seems that it is only an issue when there is heavy rain. There is a build-in discharge. There does not seem to be any intention by Government to address this.

PM says that the Cooks River alliance has announced the apparent return of mullet to Botany Bay including into the Cooks River.

PF adds that he has seen on Facebook that the Aboriginal community at Frenchman's Bay has been catching export mullet.

JB says that he was an official DPI observer of the cultural catch of Sea Mullet by the local Aboriginal community between Conwong Bay and Yarra Bay. No fish were caught over the first 3 years of the project but on the 4th year a good catch was netted at Yarra bay and distributed to the extended aboriginal community with LaPerouse family links. Another reasonable catch was made in the 5th year when the run of sea mullet was substantial and he evidenced huge schools while snorkelling off Laperouse. So far as JB is aware the last good recreational catch was about 2 years ago - he is no longer a DPI observer.

PF also notes that the fish population at Little Bay has collapsed in the last year. The ecology of the bay is being destroyed by islanders foraging for shellfish etc

JB agrees that this is certainly an issue. He recalls that in his former role at DPI, he often found that island people were doing the same thing at Sth Maroubra, Malabar and Cape Banks.. He recalls various instances in which he had to challenge these people for breaches of fishing regulations and not being in possession of a fishing licence..

HSE Update

1. Summary of complaints and incidents – BB

BB says there was only one noise complaint in November and one in December. The sources of both issues were somewhat ambiguous, but seem to have been halted.

There were two complaints in early January, and then some further complaints regarding a particular vessel at the Hutchison Port. This vessel has historically been identified as loud by the decibel readings, but in this instance it was 10 decibels louder than ever previously. The relevant shipping company was addressed by NSW Ports, and requested this issue be resolved in order for the ship to be welcomed back to the port.

As ever, BB encourages community members to contact NSW Ports when they are bothered by port noise issues.

BB makes note of a relatively new International methodology for monitoring ship noise, which is known as NEPTUNES. This is a noise rating system which could be helpful when chartering ships based on recorded noise rating. At the moment, NEPTUNES is used internationally on a voluntary basis, but is moving forward in many countries and in many places there is a push to have ships receive NEPTUNES noise ratings as standard practice.

Ship operators are often not the ship owners, and therefore operators may be incentivised to charter ships based on potential noise issues.

2. Port Botany Expansion Rail Noise (as per CoA 2.28) – BB

BB says that there have been no rail noise issues, but the duplication of the rail was recently completed.

JST says yes, it has largely been completed. Construction activity has concluded and the commissioning is taking place at present. ARTC seems to be progressing towards a launch event this week.

BB says that this means that the NSW Ports container strategy can be put into full force, meaning more containers can be brought from roads to rail.

JST explains that the ARTC is a federal government entity. They have custodianship over the line, and they will be the major delivery partner for the line.

PM says that this is all great news. This matter has been an ongoing issue for many years, and its conclusion is a relief.

JB says that he believes he heard that a section of the new Western Distributor Road that will go around the back of the airport and was supposed to link up to Foreshore Road was opened yesterday.

JST says that this is the Sydney Gateway Project, which connects the St Peters Interchange to Sydney Airport. The eastbound section, which loops around the back of the Cooks River Intermodal Terminal and the western stretch is underway.

JST says that NSW Ports has been calling on the NSW Government to fund an extension from Sydney Airport to Foreshore Road. This extension would dramatically assist the flow of traffic, particularly to the city and broader Sydney motorway network.

3. Biosecurity – BB

No biosecurity incidents

No significant incidents to report in general.

Other Business

There is no other business to discuss.

Next Meeting

Date: Tuesday, 7 May 2024

Time: 5:30pm – 7:00pm

Location: Online via Zoom