
Minutes of the 19th meeting of the
Lower Hawkesbury Estuary Management Committee
Thursday 13th March 2014
Brooklyn Community Centre
2-4 Dangar Rd, Brooklyn

Title	Family Name	Given Name	Representation	Present	Apologies	Absent	Alternate Rep.
Mr	ANDREWS	John	Mooney-Cheero Progress Association	X			
Cr	ANISSE	Antony	Councillor – Hornsby Shire Council		X		
Mr	ARNOLD	Robert	Community Representative	X			
Mr	BROWN	Steve	M S B	X			
Mr	BURNS	David	Community Representative	X			
Ms	BURTON	Tegan	Government		X		
Mr	DUNLAVIE	Graeme	NSW RMS			X	
Mr	FENWICK	Andrew	Fenwicks Marina	X			
Mr	FISH	Mike	Community Representative		X		
Ms	FRATER	Ray	NSW Bridge to Bridge Committee		X		
Mr	GREEN	Marcel	Industry & Investment, Primary Industries Fishing & Aquaculture		X		
Ms	HOWARD	Mary	Community Representative	X			
Mr	KARCZ	Bronek	Community Representative	X			
Dr	LEONG	Lim	Community Representative	X			
Mr	MACDONALD	Tim	Gosford City Council	X			
Ms	MARVELL	Cheryl	Sydney Water Corporation		X		
Ms	MCMURDO	Wendy	Community Representative	X			
Mr	MILES	David	Boat Owners Association		X		
Ms	MOOY	Rebecca	Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Management Authority		X		
Cllr	MORRIS	Hilary			X		
Mr	MOXHAM	Rob	Commercial Representative	X			
Mr	PELOSI	Gus	Office of Environment & Heritage		X		Daylan
Mr	PHILIPP	Hjalmar	Community Representative		X		
Mr	PIGNEYGUY	Justin	Hawkesbury Cruises	X			
Emer Prof	RECHER	Harry	Community Representative	X			
Mr	REES	Stan	Land and Property Management Authority		X		
Mr	ROWE	Simon	Oceanwatch Australia	X			
Dr	RUBIO	Ana	Hornsby Shire Council	X			
Ms	SEGOVIA	Ingrid	Community Representative	X			
Ms	SHORTER	Cybele	Community Representative	X			
Cllr	STRICKSON	Jeff	Councillor - Gosford City Council		X		
Mr	TAYLOR	Chris	Roylat	X			
Cllr	TILBURY	Nathan	Councillor – Hornsby Shire Council		X		
Mr	VAN ZELEWSKI	Axel	Community Representative	X			

1. WELCOME

Meeting opened at 6:14pm. Peter Coad explained that Cllr Anissee would not be in attendance and Cllr Tilbury would Chair. Cllr Tilbury welcomed all and thanked everyone for coming. Peter then introduced the guest speaker, Dane **Van der Neut**, Commercial Fishing Representative.

2. **APOLOGIES:** Cllr Anthony Anissee, Warren Brown, Tegan Burton, Mike Fish, Ray Frater, Marcel Green, Cheryl Marvell, David Miles, Rebecca Mooy, Hillary Morris, Gus Pelosi, Philipp Hjalmar, Stan Rees, Jeff Strickson.

3. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Cllr **Tilbury** explained what Pecuniary Interests are - No pecuniary interests were declared.

4. **PRESENTATION** – Proposed NSW Government changes to the management of local fisheries. Dane **Van der Neut**, Commercial Fishing Representative.

- The NSW Government allocated 16 million dollars as an incentive to industry for reform as an election promise.
- This was a policy that some fishers advising the Minister participated in – Pyrmont Pact decisions.
- Process decided by Independent Review into NSW Fisheries Management. Released in May 2012.
- The Current NSW Government accepted the 22 Review recommendations into NSW Commercial Fisheries Policy, Management and Administration with few changes.
- Issues:
 1. Fishers are expected to purchase shares so as to reduce the number of endorsements in the fishery.
 2. A total allowable catch is proposed.
 3. Fishers do not know what this will be at time they are waiting for ‘options’ papers that are due this month.
 4. The costs to fish are expected to increase with cost recovery and expected share purchases to fish.

Fishers feel there is no transparency in this reform, nor does it offer long term security to the industry

o **In Conclusion**

- The fishers are stressed due to the ongoing deliberations. There have already been two liaison officers and one more just employed.
- The Industry is fragmented due to its inability to form a Peak Industry body acceptable to the majority.
- Co-operatives have influence over decision making processes that concern fishers incomes.
- Individual fishers sit on committees representing industry with out consulting and having a majority vote on decisions made.
- Independent persons sit as chairs of committees.
- Dane would like to see the Commercial Fishing Industry become more involved in the community and have the communities support to create security for the fishers.

Cllr **Tilbury** invited the committee for questions to Dane

Harry **Recher** said there are 2 types in the fishing industries 1 – Commercial and 2 – Recreational. He believes that the recreational fishing is larger and has significant influence over Government decisions.

Axel **van Zelewski** asked about the FRAB decisions. Mary **Howard** answered that in conjunction with the PFA recommendations come from the board as to what this state feels research should be carried out.

Mary mentioned 30 years ago there were 4000 fishers registered in NSW – Currently, there are less than 1200. 56 of these are in the Hawkesbury and only half that number are fully active. The public perception is that Commercial Fishing is the reason for poor fish numbers. The industry faces a lot of insecurity.

Cybele **Shorter** asked how much income % is commercial for Australia? Dane answered that import is now in excess 85% and if the reform is adopted and reduces the current fleet, then the imports would be more.

Mary **Howard** mentioned that the annual reports are available on the web which report on the sustainability of fishing stocks

ACTION 201401: Peter **Coad** to send the Fisheries Resources Annual Report and Dane's presentation to the committee.

Bronek **Karcz** asked if the Commercial Fishing industry is sustainable, where is the evidence? Mary **Howard** replied the sustainability of fish stocks is reported in the Fisheries Resources Annual Report.

Chris **Taylor** mentioned he recently sought fisheries statistics and could not find the current information, he was only able to find 2007 data.

Leung **Lim** asked Why are the number of Commercial Fishers dropping? and can you fish anywhere? Mary **Howard** said there are 72 trawlers with 56 now active in the Hawkesbury – However each licence is specific to the catch – ie: Prawns – Eels – Lobster. A boat cannot simply fish for what's running – you are only able to fish in the Estuary in endorsed areas. There is also a gentleman's agreement with *most* fishers as to which area of the estuary you fish.

A motion was suggested for a letter to be sent to DPI

MOTION 201402: The LHEMC writes to the NSW DPI and members of Parliament within the Hawkesbury noting support for the sustainable management of fisheries in which commercial fishers are recognised for their contributions. Further, the committee notes the concerns of the fishers and seeks NSW DPI include social economic and environmental concerns in their deliberations regarding NSW Fisheries reforms for the Hawkesbury River.
Moved by Wendy **McMurdo**, seconded by Harry **Recher**. Carried unanimously.

Cllr **Tilbury** thanked Dane **Van der Neut** for his presentation.

5. CORRESPONDENCE & MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Matters arising from previous meeting, 21st November 2013:

ACTION 201315: Peter **Coad** to respond to the letter from Dangar Island resident re education about Migratory Birds.

ONGOING Will do as part of community consultation for signage design

6. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the Lower Hawkesbury Estuary Management Committee meeting, Thursday 21st November 2013 were accepted.

Accepted: Chris **Taylor**

2nd: Bronek **Karcz**

7. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE LOWER HAWKESBURY ESTUARY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

a: Ana Rubio – Hornsby Shire Council

PROBE UPDATE

- Algal Activity was report upon and graphs displayed
- Relationship turbidity and algae graphs displayed

SWIMMING MAPS – ESTUARINE HEALTH INDICES

- A new tab is now available under the swimming maps website showing current status of the health of the estuary based on OEH's Estuary Ecosystem Health Protocol
- Further information on the calculation of the health indices and daily results from <http://new.mhl.nsw.gov.au/users/HSC-EstuaryHealth>

EROSION STUDY

- OEH funded project
- Field work completed along both shorelines from Wisemans to Spencer
- Draft Final Report expected in May

SEAGRASS AWARENESS PROJECT

- Seagrass buoys 10 x Aqua marks have been serviced; 2 have been fully replaced
- Seagrass buoys along Brooklyn channel have been serviced
- Cardinal marker in Kangaroo Point area was relocated slightly to ensure boats will keep away from seagrass beds
- Work is now completed

KANGAROO PUMPOUT

- High volumes have been pumped out in 2014 with 1,004,785l pumped since 2008
- Usage maintains a seasonal pattern with high use during the warmer months

POMS

- R & D is continuing with researches from University of Sydney and HSC
- Currently in the middle of the window of infection.
- Growers are currently maintaining the industry by purchasing QX-Disease resistant Sydney Rock Oysters, however growers will need to wait a minimum of 2.5 years before getting any cash back

Ana then asked Rob Moxham (4th generation oyster farmer) to briefly talk regarding the Oyster Industry on the Hawkesbury.

Rob mentioned that the industry was struggling at the moment due to POMS and QX although there is now supply of QX-disease resistant stock but the actual supply is difficult to acquire. Rob has recently purchased 300,000 Sydney rock oysters for growth at a cost of \$9 000 but added that he will not see any income benefit from this stock for a minimum of 3 years. He feels that there is a future for Hawkesbury Oysters Farmers, but he doesn't know what at this point. Prior to the POMS outbreak, Rob employed over 30 staff but currently has only 2. Most of the work he has for them is not oyster related. Rob has purchased a small truck to ensure employment for his staff and income.

Tim **MacDonald** asked if the POMS virus has moved north? Rob said it is now officially in Brisbane Waters and although there has been significant oyster mortalities in Port Stephens, the cause of these mortalities cannot be named or located. Rob mentioned that the weather doesn't have much effect on the virus although it is known to remain dormant under 18 degrees.

Chris **Taylor** asked where are the Fish Markets getting their supply of oysters from? Rob said the majority of Pacific Oysters come from SA Tasmania and of Sydney Rocks come from the Far South Coast in NSW.

ACTION 201403: Cllr **Tilbury** to organise a meeting with Matt **Keen** M.P. & Rob Moxham to discuss oyster farmers concerns and options for the future.

b: Tim Macdonald – Gosford City Council

Gosford Council

- Has been through a large restructure and down sizing
- LEP gazetted this year.
- Hawkesbury Waterways are zoned as (W2) recreational
- The final draft is in for Pearl Beach lagoon coastal management plan
- Community information session is in the planning and coming up soon.
- GCC is currently working with oyster farmers and State Government to clear foreshore waste
- NPWL have done a foreshore cleanup
- Wisemans Ferry Road has sections that are “slumping”, council is looking into management and upgrades – also major erosion in the Spencer area. GCC will be interested in seeing the results from the erosion study undertaken by HSC in this area

Mary **Howard** asked if the Recreational Zoning is applicable to all foreshore to Wisemans? Tim said he would distribute LEP information to all

ACTION 201405: Tim **Macdonald** to distribute LEP information to all

d: Tegan Burton – National Parks and Wildlife Services

Peter **Coad** read a document supplied by Tegan **Burton**, NPWS in her absence.

- Briefing held at Gentlemans Halt Hawkesbury River in Marramarra National Park. Used the benefits of low tide to focus efforts on collecting rubbish from the mangroves. Mangroves are one of the natural filtration systems of the river and today one of the thongs they filter from our waterways is rubbish
- 40 Volunteers from NPWS Muogamarra Bushcare – Floating Landcare – Willow Warriors and Wanderers Bushwalking Club

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- Transport was supplied by Rob Moxham who also shared his knowledge and passion for the river
 - RESULTS – 60 CUA day bags full of glass bottles/fragments – plastic bottles – lids – wrappers- thongs – foam polystyrene – balls. Larger items such as plastic buckets and drums – at least 8 car tyres – plastic pallets and construction timber full of nails.

8. GENERAL BUSINESS

A) Peat Island Redevelopment Progress

Tim **Macdonald** has researched Government for ideas/plans but cannot find much.
John **Andrews** said he has little information regarding the future of Peat Island future and no further information has been forwarded recently.
Broniek **Karcz** said he also has no new information.

B) NSW RFS Bushfire clearing rule (known as 10/50 rule)

- John **Andrews** has spoken to Amelia Jones . She said it is still only a proposal and not legislated. There has been no consultation on the proposal by NSW RFS.

ACTION 201406: Cllr **Tilbury** to follow up with the NSW RFS 10/50 rule proposal and report back to committee.

C) Riverside Lighting

- Harry **Recher** noted that some residence of Wobby Beach have extremely bright lights
- there is no regulations that apply to lighting on private residence.
- Justin **Pigneyguy** suggested it may be considered to be a navigational hazard which NSW RMS could address

ACTION 201407: Tim **Macdonald** to look at Councils perspective and report back

D) Other Business

Robert **Arnold** asked if the rumour that Kangaroo Point was to be closed was true ? Peter Coad said the facility was being reviewed and options for pumpout were being considered.

ACTION 201404: Cllr **Tilbury** to find out the status of whether or not the pump out facility will be opened or closed and report back to the committee.

E) Future Meetings

Next Meeting to be held 15th May 2014

8. CLOSE

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:32pm