

Tims Thicket Septage Ponds Discussions Minutes of Meeting

Date: 29 September 2017 at 3.30pm

Venue: City of Mandurah - Works and Services Meeting Room 1

In Attendance:

Mark Newman, CEO City of Mandurah

Allan Claydon, Director Works and Services (DWS)

Hon. Cr Fred Riebeling

Mel Horton, Chairperson Bouvard Coast Care Group (BCCG)

Ron Glasson, Member BCCG

Elizabeth Frankish, Member BCCG

Barry Posetti, Member BCCG

Angela Bickerstaffe, Executive Assistant Works and Services

Apologies:

Cr Caroline Knight

Ron Doig, Member BCCG

Background

Bouvard Coast Care Group (BCCG) published 'Tims Thicket' – An Inconvenient Truth incorporating a timeline of events at the Tims Thicket Waste Facility and statements questioning the management of the facility.

The City invited BCCG to discuss their concerns.

An information pack was provided to members of BCCG at the commencement of the meeting.

The CEO agreed with the BCCG suggestion/request to relocate the irrigated grassed area from the old landfill site to a 10 metre x 100 metre strip (an equivalent to that initially proposed) along the western boundary line of the City's inert waste site inside the boundary of R43301.

The treatment process was explained to the group using a series of diagrams. With regards to the 'Spraying Field'. The DWS advised that 'spraying' was the wrong terminology. The method used is an irrigation drip system (via underground pipe) which provides water to the Vetiver grassed area to further remove nitrogen and phosphorus from the liquid. It was emphasised that this system is used to deal with overflow liquid (during winter periods and storm events only). The majority of liquid evaporates over time whilst in the septage ponds.

To avoid the irrigated area from drying out the City will monitor and if necessary install a bore for watering purposes during the summer months.

BCCG noted however that the 3.2 million litres were discharged in 2014. This was acknowledged in the report to Council in 2016 and reflected the peak year for the receivable of septage into the facility and a wet winter. The discharge to a leach drain system accords with the original approval for the facility.

The Water Corporation have confirmed that an area of land to the west of the City's site (R39349) will be required for a future wastewater treatment facility.

The group asked what would happen to the process at Tims Thicket when the Water Corporation establishes its facility.

The future Water Corporation will involve treatment plants to treat raw sewage from reticulated sewer systems in residential homes. Unfortunately some older residential areas of Mandurah still use septic tanks for wastewater disposal and will still require the Tims Thicket Septage Facility.

To obviate the need for the Tims Thicket Septage Facility, it is recommended to lobby State Government to reinstate and fund the Infill Sewerage Program. This program removes the need for septic tanks. It should be noted that Water Corporation policy does not allow for septic tank disposal directly into their facilities.

Concern was raised over previous damage to sides of the septage pond liners. What will the City do to prevent such damage in the future?

The septage ponds are fenced off (fenced within an already fenced area) to prevent wildlife entering the area. However, if liners are damaged, contractors will patch and weld repairs where necessary. Liners will be checked when desludging is taking place.

The arrangement for pond liners is as follows:

Storage and Balancing Ponds	New liner placed over old liner overlay liner with geotextile overlay with 200 mm thick limestone protective layer.
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Anaerobic Ponds	New liner placed over old liner overlay liner with geotextile overlay with 125 mm thick concrete protective layer.
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The Group questioned the method of installation as to whether this met the manufacturers requirements for installation and warranty of product.

For information and to provide perspective, the DWS advised the group of the composition between the Tims Thicket facility and the Caddadup Waste Water Treatment Plant

- Tims Thicket Septage Facility: Licenced 5000m³ per annum.
- Caddadup Waste Water Treatment plant: Licenced 1,095,000m³ per annum
Discharge 682,085m³ per annum

(The Water Corporation licence L6748/1994/13 has an approval for a maximum of 3000m³ per day which equates to 1,095,000m³ per annum)

BCCG enquired about excess septage waste coming down from Perth.

The Tims Thicket Septage Facility reached peak input when local septic waste was no longer able to be disposed of at a local composting company business. Mention was made of the DER action to close some septage treatment facilities in Perth due to lack of adherence to licence conditions. The combination of local contractors and contractors from as far as Belmont due to these closures, necessitated ongoing demand for disposal of septage at Tims Thicket thus advancing the peak load condition.

BCCG made the point this will happen again as ticketed loads were coming from Belmont in Perth. They came here due to closure of Biorganics.

The Tims Thicket Septage Facility services local sewerage but will take from outside the area if required. However, the City cannot exceed its licence limit of 5000 kilolitres per annum without approval from the DER.

Nambeelup Industrial Area - what forecasting of future sewerage operations have been undertaken.

The response was that the project was at least 2 – 4 years before any development takes place. The CEO would ask the question at the next Transform Peel Reference Group Meeting.

BCCG raised the issue of breaches of the licence conditions. DWS stated that there had been no breaches, only that there had been amendments to Licence – 4 June 2015 on the inert waste licence.

DER issued amendment to licence removing category 61 (liquid waste) from the Tims Thicket Facility. The licence held improvement conditions and reported contamination breaches. BCCG produced a copy of the licence.

DWS advised that the City had not been notified of contamination breaches and will investigate.

Subsequently, the advice is as follows:

The June 2015 DER licence made reference to minor non-compliances and incorporated three improvement conditions in the licence, which were subsequently complied with by Cleanaway and the City.

A formal inspection of the Tims Thicket Waste Facility was conducted on 15 April 2015 by officers of the DER. A number of minor non-compliances were identified during the inspection. The licensee, Cleanaway, was required to supply additional information to the DER who issued a letter on 11 July 2015 advising that the outstanding actions of the inspection had now been met.

DER officers conducted a further inspection of the Tims Thicket Waste Facility on 25 August 2016 and issued correspondence on 11 December 2016 advising that the site was compliant and no breaches had been identified.

Water monitoring results have been published annually as required by the DER (now DWER) licence conditions. This was previously undertaken by Cleanaway who were the licence holder for the management of the facility.

The City now holds the licence for the facility and samples water on a six monthly basis. This is determined by the DWER which requires testing pre and post the winter period and be greater than five months apart. It is also imperative that the sampling be undertaken by a suitably certified consultant to preserve the integrity and independence of the results. These results can be made available to BCCG.

The 2012 Annual Monitoring Report shows some concern of the pH levels in bores 1-9. BCCG alerted the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) in Jun of **2014**.

It was suggested reviewing the report and for example in particular the pH levels in December 2012 Bores 1-9 showing an acidic spike in particular Bore 7 (3.5pH – very acidic).

BCCG suggests the testing was either done incorrectly or there was something causing this spike.

Subsequently, a review of the results did indicate that this spike was an anomaly in that the results in early 2012 and mid 2013 returned back to what would be called consistent levels. Quite correctly the reported figure has been included in the data report.

BCCG requested the City to publish the water monitoring results online and to consult with nearby residents of plans/proposals for major issues within the Tims Thicket site to avoid community unease. The City agreed to this request.

BCCG requested to reinstate recreational water quality monitoring on Melros Beach and Tims Thicket Beach. The City agreed to this request.

Subsequently, The City's Principal Environment Health officer advised that it was a department decision to remove Melros Beach from the recreational water sampling program due to reduced usage of these sites by bathers and water sampling results indicating compliance with water quality guidelines over a long time period.

BCCG acknowledged that the monitoring bores were on a classified site however they requested permission to monitor bores located outside of the facility area – bores on the other reserves which the City may not be aware of (not bores 1-9). BCCG to make a formal request to the City and the City will seek advice.

Now relocating irrigation field to inside R43301 BCCG asked what will happen to that land which forms part of R24198.

This part of the reserve accommodates two wind turbine compounds which provides power to the Tims Thicket waste facility. The long term plan contemplates public open space/playing fields and thus may be needed for community infrastructure. It is acknowledged that the view of BCCG is to remove reserve R24198 from its current planning building envelope in its resubmission of the current plan to be submitted.

R24198 land use change to 'Conservation and Passive Recreation'. BCCG to put request in writing. The City will investigate. BCCG have already made a request to the Minister.

BCCG requested that all future COM proposals/applications for Tim's Thicket be put to the residents first with the aim of allaying fears and also submitted to MEAG. Mark Newman acknowledged that putting updates through MEAG would make sense and would consider the request regarding residential consultation.

The City provided BCCG with copies of the City's initial responses to the groups' management concerns of the Tims Thicket site. The City requires additional time to provide a comprehensive response.

Both parties agreed that the meeting had been positive and would continue with open communication in the future, noting that the correct avenue for waste management issues is via the DWS and the Coordinator Waste Management.

It was proposed to meet again in four weeks with BCCG to contact Angela Bickerstaffe on 9550 3851 or email angela.bickerstaffe@mandurah.wa.gov.au with preferred dates.

Cr Riebeling left the meeting at approximately 4.00pm.

Meeting closed at 4.40pm



Actions from meeting

Action	Action By
1. The City to amend its current application to relocate the proposed irrigated grass area from the old landfill site to a 10 metre x 100 metre strip along the western boundary of the current inert landfill site (see attached diagram) for consideration by the EPA.	City of Mandurah – CEO, DWS
2. Nambeelup Industrial Area - what forecasting of future sewerage operations have been undertaken.	CEO to raise at next meeting of the Transform Peel Reference Group Meeting.
3. The City to investigate “contamination” breaches from inspection of 9 Jun 2014 onwards, and improvement conditions from the issue of Amendment to Licence issued 4 June 2015 and provide a report to BCCG or publish the results online.	City of Mandurah – Waste Management
4. The City agreed to groundwater quality sampling from all monitoring bores quarterly (noting the licence requires 6 months as a minimum) and publish publically water monitoring results online	City of Mandurah – Waste Management
5. BCCG request the City undertake consultation with nearby residents of future plans/proposals for major issues concerning the Tims Thicket site to avoid community unease and refer such future proposal to the MEAG..	City of Mandurah – Waste Management
6. The City agreed to reinstate recreational water monitoring on Melros and Tims Thicket Beach – why were these sites removed from monitoring.	City of Mandurah – Environmental Health
7. BCCG to formally seek permission to monitor bores located outside of the waste facility area on council reserves.	BCCG to make a formal request to the City
8. Land use change of Reserve 24198 to “Conservation and Passive Recreation”	BCCG to make a formal request to the City
9. Meeting within next 4 weeks.	BCCG to contact Angela Bickerstaffe with preferred dates and times
10. Draft minutes to be provided to BCCG for review.	Angela Bickerstaffe to distribute