



This document was produced by Jen Lilburn with significant input and guidance by office-bearers of Yarrville On The Nose Inc and Brooklyn Residents Action Group.

Photos were supplied by EPA Victoria, Keith Greaves, Helen Paterson and Brooklyn Residents Action Group.

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The BCRG page provides details about future meetings and notes from previous meetings dating back to 2008. On this page you can subscribe to our 250-strong database to receive updates about emerging issues and progress.



## BACKGROUND AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Our purpose is to facilitate community, industry, local/state government and EPA working together to ensure that public concerns and aspirations regarding odour, noise and dust in the general Brooklyn area are consistently understood and considered.



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# What is BCRG?

The Brooklyn Community Representative Group is an open opportunity for members of the community, industry, local and state government to discuss issues relating to the air quality of the general Brooklyn area. It also enables the communication of plans and progress by individual industries, local government and EPA Victoria.

The forum, which is held four times per year, encourages mutual understanding and a shared feeling of collaboration and partnership in the Brooklyn area between industry, the broader community, relevant municipalities and state government departments.

BCRG has no decision-making authority. Participation is by open invitation.



**Brooklyn Residents Action Group Inc (BRAG)** exists to “represent the interests of Brooklyn residents around issues of odour, noise and dust from the Brooklyn industrial precinct and also on other resident’s issues to improve the social and physical needs of the community”.

BRAG is a great facilitator of local projects that improve the Brooklyn environment. For instance, the Federation Trail development into a public park and green space between Millers Road and Geelong Road, Brooklyn, was funded through the Courts by a \$50,000 grant to BRAG in 2012. 10,000 indigenous trees, shrubs and ground covers were planted. The installation of entry fencing and garden and a water drinking fountain along with community participation at a celebratory event at the end of the planting program added to the success of the project.

Along with the funding through the Courts, an additional \$85,000 was contributed to the project through in kind support by Hobsons Bay City Council, Melbourne Water, VicRoads Transpacific, Sunshine Groupe and the office of Wade Noonan MP .

The second stage of the Federation Trail development between Geelong Road and Kororoit Creek commenced in 2013 and is due to be completed in June 2014. It has been made possible through the generous support of VicRoads, Melbourne Water, Brimbank City Council, EPA Victoria, Transpacific Industries, Delta Demolitions Group, Burns Earthmoving, Sunshine Groupe, Toyota Australia, APA Group, Australian Tallow, Cedar Meats Australia, Cargill Australia, Fulton Hogan, JBS Australia , Marks Henderson, Sims Metal Management, Veolia Environmental Services, Friends of Lower Kororoit Creek.

### For further information:

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Federation Trail Project 2012



# What is the relationship between BCRG, BRAG and OTN?

Brooklyn Residents Action Group Inc (BRAG) and Yarraville On The Nose Inc (OTN) are community-based groups comprising and chaired by residents of Brooklyn and Yarraville respectively.

The two groups represent the views of their members in a variety of ways, including

- Contribution at public meetings (including the BCRG Community Forum),
- Provision of advice to BCRG regarding communication processes and content,
- Representation at strategic meetings with Councils, industry and government departments to accelerate progress, and
- Direct advocacy and lobbying for change.

**Yarraville**  
**ON THE**  
**NOSE**  
COMMUNITY GROUP

**Yarraville On The Nose Inc** exists to *achieve air quality (odour, noise and dust) for Yarraville residents the same as that enjoyed by the rest of Melbourne by lobbying State and local governments and industries in our neighbourhood to adopt 21st century business standards and practices.*

One of the projects involving Yarraville On The Nose was planting of semi-mature trees throughout Yarraville. The \$50,000 project was undertaken by Maribyrnong City Council, using funds obtained from EPA's Inspiring Environmental Solutions program, in which companies found guilty of an environmental offence are directed by the Court to fund a community environment project.

**For further information:**

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## BCRG Background

From as early as 2000 the Brooklyn community called for a forum that would give it a voice and expose the long-term problems of odour, noise and dust and their impacts on the health and amenity of residents and employees.

BCRG was at last set up as a short-term community reference group in 2007 to bring together the parties who have an interest in the air quality issues emanating from the Brooklyn Industrial Precinct.

For the first year meetings were rotated across the three Councils, with Councillors from the 'host' municipality chairing the meetings.

In August 2008 an open community forum was held to determine the scope and scale of community concerns. The forum involved 89 participants and was professionally facilitated. It resulted in a detailed report confirming issues and concerns.

Shortly after this the forum's facilitator was asked to independently chair BCRG meetings on an ongoing basis, and the Brooklyn Community Hall became its permanent 'home'.

As BCRG provided the only opportunity for community and industry people to discuss issues and learn about progress, interest in attending meetings began to grow. Meetings typically involve 40-50 people, peaking at over 90 during 2010.

BCRG is supported by the municipalities of Brimbank, Hobsons Bay and Maribyrnong, which share costs of catering and administration. EPA Victoria covers the costs of the independent, professional convenor (chair).

# Our Vision and Goal

BCRG shares the vision of the 2012 Brooklyn Evolution Strategy, which was produced by Brimbank City Council in consultation with the community and industry:

*Over the next 20 years, the Brooklyn Industrial Precinct will evolve into a key employment node for Melbourne's west, a destination of choice for new, 'clean and green' investment and development.*

**It is within this context that the BCRG goal was developed in 2013:**

Brooklyn Industrial Precinct **industries are considered a valuable part of the local community.** They operate to **modern-day standards, comply** with all regulations, and actively contribute to the **best possible amenity for people** who live, work and recreate in the area.

**In order to achieve this goal, in 2013 BCRG members stated that their forum has the following roles. It should be noted that these are the views of individual members, rather than the group as a whole.**

- Lobby local Government/State government to protect the amenity, health and wellbeing of residents and workers in the area
- Lobby government to implement the Brooklyn Evolution Strategy and in particular provide certainty as to the location of the East West link.
- Lobby government to facilitate the evolution of industry including future planning, modern standards, legislative changes where required

## 2011

- Brooklynip website launched
- Charges laid against Australian Tallow
- Cargill enters an Enforceable Undertaking and later agrees to \$600,000 upgrades to fix odour issues and \$50,000 to community street tree project
- VicRoads repairs verges in Francis Street (a major dust contributor)
- EPA Victoria and Brimbank City Council formally commit to working with BCRG to ensure the community's aspirations are reflected in the actions they take, and to provide feedback about how BCRG informs their decisions 2012
- Hobsons Bay CC undertakes kerb and channel works and install wire barriers on Cemetery Rd and Francis St to reduce dust
- Brimbank CC completes drainage works in Jones and Bunting Roads to reduce dust
- Award-winning Brooklyn Evolution Strategy developed by Brimbank CC to provide long-term strategy to improve (among other things) amenity and environmental outcomes.
- Transpacific Market Road landfill closed
- Tasman Logistics sealed container yard

## 2013

- 24 Pollution Abatement Notices (to October 2013) issued by EPA Victoria to industries to install engineering controls to manage dust
- Pollution Abatement Notice issued to Australian Tallow Producers to control odour.
- Roads Working Group set up involving local government, EPA Victoria and VicRoads to address road verges and unsealed roads
- Hobsons Bay City Council formally commit to working with BCRG to ensure the community's aspirations are reflected in the actions they take.

The following is a list of some key milestones for the Brooklyn Industrial Precinct, as identified by BCRG participants at the May 2013 meeting. Many of the actions are a direct result of BCRG's advocacy.

## 2009

- Cheryl Batagol and John Merritt (EPA Victoria) committed action, support and leadership to addressing Brooklyn's problems
- Mayors of Brimbank, Maribyrnong and Hobsons Bay attended BCRG and committed action
- Sims Metal Management committed to broadband reversing beepers on all forklifts operating at night
- Governance change at Brimbank City Council resulted in greater focus and priority to Brooklyn

## 2010

- Dept Health validated health concerns regarding dust
- Pollution Abatement Notices re dust were issued to 6 companies—many more to follow over time
- Brimbank CC reviewed planning permits and compliance inspections. 3 businesses contributing to dust left the area
- First blitz on industry compliance involving EPA, Vic Pol, Sherriff, Vic Roads, Work Safe, Brimbank CC
- SITA Organics Recycling moved out of Brooklyn
- Australian Tallow begins process to upgrade factory extraction and improve biofilters
- Executive Officer appointed to BCRG
- Swift fined for discharge of effluent

- Create an environment to maintain community pressure for change
- Encourage membership to report back to stakeholder groups outside the forum – ask those groups to put BCRG in their Terms of Reference
- Increase media exposure
- Voice opinions, not restricted by company links
- Advocacy
- Provide industry with feedback regarding concerns and compliments, maintain pressure for change
- Reporting forum for steering/implementation groups
- Seek private sector investment
- Celebrate success
- Engage with local workers, industries and residents
- Seek to improve land use – move away from container yards to light industry – to achieve better use of land
- Broker partnerships with local land users
- Industry and community working together to support change
- Industry to report on targets (as they apply to them) on a regular basis
- To maintain the momentum
- Deliver a message in a constructive and considered manner
- A chance to network and talk
- Maintain influential representation at BCRG



# What does BCRG achieve?

The BCRG process has been valuable in the following ways:

## Bringing the Community Together

BCRG has enabled a broad cross-section of the community to articulate the scale and impacts of odour, noise and dust issues, rather than a few individuals within the community being labelled as 'whingers'.

It has complemented and validated the advocacy role of BRAG and OTN, and has given the community a stronger voice.

Without BCRG, individuals/groups would have to approach local and state government and industries separately: this would be beyond the capacity of the community and it would be almost impossible for the community to generate a consistent and focused approach to the problems in Brooklyn Industrial Precinct.

BCRG has also provided a forum for Councils and EPA to communicate progress – the information generates confidence in the community that action is being taken to address their concerns.

## Bringing the Decision Makers Together

All parties who can fix the odour, noise and dust issues are now on board and working together, largely as a result of the BCRG process.

BCRG has enabled government and industry to see the level of anger and frustration across the community first-hand, and this has driven the need for change.



## Getting Attention and Focus

Continued advocacy by BCRG members about dust issues led to the dust monitoring program, the results of which confirmed the magnitude of the dust problem (far worse than that recorded in any other suburb of Melbourne and well above the National Standard for air quality) and potential health impacts.

This has led to increased resources across state and local governments, giving greater focus and attention to the problem.

Leadership changes within the EPA and Brimbank City Council in late 2009 and 2010 have contributed to a cultural change in both organisations. Within each there now exists a strong commitment to dedicated action to address environmental issues in the Brooklyn Industrial Precinct.

The municipalities of Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong and Brimbank, along with EPA Victoria have all formally committed to taking the Brooklyn community's aspirations regarding air quality into account in the decisions they take.

Notwithstanding the above, community members continue to express frustration that progress has been too slow.

Nonetheless, there is optimism that the right processes are now in place and that a much anticipated, sustainable change will occur in the short to medium term.

Community members appreciate that the Brooklyn Industrial Precinct's environmental problems are enormous and cannot be fixed overnight, but stress that Brooklyn and Yarraville residents and workers demand the same air quality that is enjoyed by the rest of Melbourne.

