



BCRG COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE SESSION SUMMARY

WEDNESDAY

8 MARCH, 2017

4:00pm – 7.00pm

Brooklyn Community Centre, Cypress Avenue, Brooklyn



PURPOSE

To provide an opportunity for the community to speak one-on-one with representatives from EPA, state government, Councils, and industry about their efforts to improve Brooklyn's air quality.

The intent of these notes is to promote open communication between local business, local and state government, community and EPA Victoria (EPA). They are not to be used in a manner that compromises this objective.

Notes from this event will be posted on the Brooklyn Industrial Precinct website and will be available to the public.

BACKGROUND

The Brooklyn Community Representative Group Community forum (BCRG) is an opportunity for members of the community, industry, local and state government to discuss issues about the air quality of the general Brooklyn area. It also enables the communication of plans and progress by individual industries, local government and EPA. BCRG has been operating as an open forum since 2008 in a standard meeting format where representatives from community, Council, industry and government agencies are invited to present updates and respond to questions. Three or four meetings per year are held on a Wednesday at 6.30pm – 8.30pm and are independently facilitated by Jen Lilburn, Kismet Forward.

THE OPEN HOUSE SESSION

The 8 March 2017 meeting of BCRG was convened as an Open House (Drop-in) session at the Brooklyn Community Hall in Cypress Avenue, Brooklyn. This provided an opportunity for participants to have one-on-one conversations with agencies, councils and industries. In addition, the event was held earlier (4-7pm, rather than the usual 6-8pm) to attract a new cohort of residents.



Sixteen organisations set up displays and were available for the community to approach directly. EPA Victoria also conducted four tours of the air monitoring station in the nearby Brooklyn Reserve throughout the evening. A maximum of four people could attend each tour.

More images can be seen on the Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/BrooklynCommunityRepresentativeGroup>

ORGANISATIONS ON DISPLAY

NAME	ORGANISATION TYPE
Brooklyn Community Representative Group	Community Forum
Brooklyn Community Action Group	Community Advocacy Group
EPA Victoria	State Government Agency
EPA Victoria, Metro	State Government Agency
EPA Victoria Air Monitoring Station Tours	State Government Agency
Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Group	State Government Agency
Sustainability Victoria	State Government Agency
VicRoads	State Government Agency
Brimbank City Council	Local Government
Hobsons Bay City Council	Local Government
Maribyrnong City Council	Local Government
Cleanaway	Local Industry
City Circle	Local Industry
Delta Recycling	Local Industry
Cargill	Local Industry
Sims Metal	Local Industry
Sunshine Groupe	Local Industry
JBS Australia	Local Industry

Seven other organisations were invited but were either reluctant to display, unable to attend or didn't respond.

PROMOTION OF THE SESSION

Promotion of the Open House event was increased (from the normal notice of BCRG meetings) to ensure a new audience was reached but kept to a low budget approach. This included:

- The BCRG e-news promoted the new forum eight times from January to its 250 members with an open rate of 33%.
- The A4 flyer was available for download and distribution from the enews and website.
- Information about the event was available on the www.brooklynip.com.au website, Brimbank CC events, Hobsons Bay CC community events and the Star Weekly website community events page.
- 900 leaflets were delivered to the residential area of Brooklyn - west of Millers Rd, south of Geelong Rd and north of the Westgate Freeway in the week prior.
- EPA Victoria issued a [Media Release](#) about the event on 22 February 2017.
- The Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/BrooklynCommunityRepresentativeGroup/> is still relatively small with 132 followers. Promotion included several posts, a specific 'event' which was also boosted to: *Location - Living In: Australia: Brooklyn (+10 mi) Victoria, Age: 30 - 60, Interests - Environmentally friendly, Dust, Sustainable living, Pollution, Air pollution, Noise or Landfill*. This campaign was seen by 1043 people.
- The Brimbank and Hobson Bay City council communications teams shared the event through their social media channels.
- The Hobsons Bay/Maribyrnong Star Weekly put a brief notice in its 15 February 2017 edition.

An informal poll of attendees asked how they heard about the event. The majority of the residents and community who haven't participated in BCRG before said they were responding to the letterbox-dropped flyer (20) and through Facebook (4).

Regular BCRG community attendees mostly heard about the event through the enews.

ATTENDANCE

There were 86 attendees recorded: 41 residents/community, 14 industry, and 31 others including council and agency staff. This is the highest number of BCRG participants recorded since 2009. Of the residents, 31 were new to BCRG. This result exceeded expectations and indicated that there is still a lot of concern within the local community which is not always registered at the normal BCRG meetings.

The feedback also indicated that the change in timing allowed some people to attend who couldn't normally.

Apologies were received from the Offices of Minister D'Ambrosio and Hon Wade Noonan MP; Nial Finegan, EPA Victoria; Cr Sandra Wilson, Hobsons Bay City Council; Helen Paterson, Containerspace; Tony Kairouz, Cedar Meats and Sarah Altmann, Western Distributor project.



AIR MONITORING STATION TOURS

Thirteen people took advantage of the tours of the Air Monitoring Station in Brooklyn Reserve conducted by scientists from the Air Quality team at EPA Victoria. Due to the size of the station, each tour could accommodate a maximum of 4 people.



FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

Jen Lilburn, (BCRG Convenor) was keen to gauge the response of attendees to the new format and seek input into the future direction of BCRG meetings. The responses have been grouped into four categories: **New to BCRG**, **Regular BCRG attendee**, **Industry participant** and **Other**.

Jen also asked for feedback on a potential name change for the group.



WHAT DID YOU THINK OF TONIGHT'S FORMAT?

Sixteen responses were recorded from those new to BCRG and all were very happy to have the opportunity to attend this BCRG event. Participants welcomed the diversity of organisations and industries that were on hand and enjoyed being able to speak one-to-one about their personal experiences and issues. They felt that the organisations were willing to talk frankly although a couple were sceptical about the information they received. Other positive factors included the new timing which was much more suitable for some, it was easier to hear compared to regular meetings and listening to different perspectives around the issues.

'It was encouraging to talk to the companies and hear about what they are doing to improve the area's air.'
New to BCRG

'Yes but things will move at their usual pace.'
New to BCRG

Nine responses from regular BCRG participants echoed the support for the Open house format as it enabled a different form of discussion and encouraged new community members along who are also concerned about the noise, dust and odour issues in Brooklyn. Some concerns included ensuring the time allowed people to get there from work and the potential for some community members to be intimidated by industry presence.

'One to one works for me - I can air my thoughts. I'm not comfortable doing that in a large meeting.'
BCRG regular

'Good format. The people who I needed to speak to are here.'
BCRG regular

'Good to see new faces.'
BCRG regular

Five responses were recorded from industry members which supported the format as it allowed one-to-one discussions with community members where more detailed information could be shared to help increase their understanding of the issues from the industry perspective. This is not always possible in a big meeting. They did sense that there was reluctance by some community members to approach them. One also thought other industries should have been present as part of their permit compliance.

'Worthwhile speaking to people and letting them know what's going on. They gave us suggestions and we could add to their understanding.'
Industry member

'People seem to be happier to chat one on one than put their hand up in big group.'
Industry member

Council staff felt that the format was more beneficial than the usual meeting format but some found the timing difficult to get staff engaged in attending.

'The night was run really well and there was a steady stream of people.'
Agency staff member

The tour of the Air Monitoring station was appreciated by those who attended.

'I am pleased by how informed and knowledgeable people on the tour have been.'
(Tour leader)

WE ARE THINKING OF UPDATING THE NAME OF THE GROUP – SOMETHING THAT SPEAKS TO WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE. ANY THOUGHTS OR SUGGESTIONS?

There were five responses to this and the majority felt it wasn't necessary and wouldn't impact on the real changes that are needed. A couple of suggestions were Brooklyn Community Group or Community of Brooklyn Action Group

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FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

Following the event an online survey of the organisations that had displays at the event was conducted. The survey was also posted on the Facebook page however there were no responses from the community recorded. There were 10 responses received.

WAS YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE BCRG DROP-IN SESSION WORTHWHILE? (PLEASE EXPLAIN)

All the respondents thought that their involvement in the drop-in session was worthwhile as it provided a different platform for members of the community to interact with industry, council and government agencies. It was generally felt that it offered a chance to engage in a more personal way and have more in depth conversations around the issues and processes involved – whether council, agency or industry.

'Yes, I was able to respond to questions from the public and government in a lot more depth and take the time clarify their individual concerns. It was also good to be able to debunk some of the Myths about our organisation.'

'Highly effective. Format enable community to comfortably approach and discuss their issues and concerns in an unhurried manner. Format made it easy to establish a personal connection with each person.'

WHAT WERE THE MAIN THEMES THAT PEOPLE WANTED TO DISCUSS?

- *"Amenity impacts. Increasing recycling and not to send material to landfill, which can be recovered"*
- *"Dust, Dust management, Height of our landfill currently. The range and types of recycling we do"*
- *"Sealed roadways and wanting to know if we were moving in the future"*
- *"What our site actually did and how we had made changes to improve the site's environmental performance."*
- *"Western Distributor, Increasing traffic and trucks, Dog Park, Kororoit Creek Trail, Development in the area"*
- *"Litter and dumped rubbish and the need for better collection opportunities for their waste"*
- *"Odour, dust and local issues managed by councils (Mostly road noise). Over development of residential" Brooklyn."*
- *"Noise from trucks on Millers Rd and Geelong Rd. Access onto Millers Rd due to truck volumes. Maintenance issues on Millers Rd and Federation Trail path."*

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE IDEA OF RUNNING A SIMILAR EVENT EACH YEAR INSTEAD OF ONE OF THE NORMAL BCRG MEETINGS?

All of the eight respondents fully supported holding a similar event in this format each year. One suggested reducing the timing to 2 hours and another suggested more industries should be represented.

WHAT WOULD BE THE BEST TIME OF YEAR?

Six of the nine respondents suggested the early part of the year when it is warmer and longer days.

HOW COULD WE IMPROVE THE DROP-IN SESSION FORMAT?

- *"I think the set up was fine, could we offer local schools or universities a chance to visit who may wish to learn about different industry or state govt agencies? As this may have opened up more discussion."*
- *"I would make it shorter - 3 hours is a long time. Say 5.30pm-7.00pm."*
- *"A large map of the Brooklyn area identifying all points of interest and sites. A lot of people really didn't have a good understanding of the general layout and who was from where."*
- *"Generally very well run, maybe more opportunities/space for people to sit down and look at plans, write comments, etc. Perhaps spread the tables out more?"*
- *"Perhaps review the layout ... bring everything forward"*
- *"I thought it ran well and the set up allowed people to move around well inside the room"*
- *"Mayor of each council should be there along with more industry representation"*
- *"Invite local councillors, and Local MP (for a limited nominated time i.e. one hour session)."*

ANY OTHER COMMENTS?

Respondents thanked BCRG for trying something different - to have all the key agencies/industry together at the forum was a great opportunity for locals to get information and express their thoughts. One felt that it is the same industries being represented and these are generally doing the right thing by the community. Sites of concern do not seem to attend and major issues like roadways, traffic and track volumes cannot be addressed adequately in this forum. It was emphasised that the publicity needs to be well communicated across Brooklyn and it would be good to get the local paper to report on the event (with a picture). The refreshments were appreciated!

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LESSONS LEARNT/SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- Produce a map showing where the industries and possible issues are located.
- Review the timing – does it meet most people’s needs?
- Need to have a ‘residents only’ meeting. Some people are intimidated by industry presence.
- The layout allowed for 16 stalls of 2m x2m inside the hall which is the maximum that could fit comfortably – to get more representation it may be necessary for some agencies to share sites.
- Feedback walls should be manned to encourage participation.
- Stallholders could provide more seats for one-to-one discussions.
- Allow a break in tours for the tour leaders.
- 900 flyers were required for letterbox drops to the immediate residential area.
- Review if advertising in local papers is required in future.
- Provision of refreshments throughout the event was important.
- The area that allowed people to sit and have a chat/cup of tea was worthwhile.

Report prepared by Andrea Mason, Executive Officer, BCRG

