

Townsville Port Community Liaison Group

Meeting Minutes



Date: Wednesday 2 February 2022, 5pm – 6.30pm
Venue: Microsoft Teams
Chair: Ranee Crosby, CEO, Port of Townsville

Attendees

1	Ranee Crosby	CEO, Port of Townsville (Chair)
2	Drew Penny	COO, Port of Townsville (presenting)
3	Elaine Glen	Acting Manager Environment and Planning
4	Kim Wheatley	Manager Corporate Affairs, Port of Townsville (presenting)
5	Sarah Mathiesen	Corporate Affairs Advisor, Port of Townsville (minutes)
6	Alana O'Brien	Environmental Advisor, Port of Townsville (presenting)
7	Tom McAuliffe	Manager – Molasses, Wilmar Sugar Australia Limited (presenting)
8	Norman Rains	Townsville Birdlife
9	Sharon Marks	VRM Biologik
10	Keith Noble	Community Rep
11	Ian Ferguson	Community Rep
12	Brittany Butler	Community Rep
13	Craig Knight	Community Rep
14	Rick Vernon	Magnetic Island Ratepayers Association
15	Adam Smith	Local Marine Advisory Committee (via Teams)
16	Heath Hatfield	Community Rep (via Teams)
17	Emily Blumson	Community Rep (via Teams)

Apologies

1	Leslie Sampson	President of Magnetic Island Community Development Association
2	Holly Lambert	QF8 Volunteer Coastguard
3	Leon Kippin	Community Rep
4	Brenton Creed	Community Rep

Actions Summary

Actions from this meeting:

ACTION: Share the Alternate DMPA report with the CLG once it is completed.

ACTION: The Port will provide a CU update at the next CLG meeting

Outstanding actions from previous meetings:

ACTION: Port of Townsville to invite CLG members to see the Woomera. (Possibly AUG)

ACTION: Arrange an outing on the Osprey once COVID-19 restrictions allow. (Planned for AUG)

ACTION: Port to present 30-year outlook plan to CLG at a future meeting.

ACTION: Arrange a future CLG presentation about climate change action being taken by the transport and freight industries. (Planned for AUG)

1. Welcome/Apologies

Chair Raneë Crosby welcomed members to the CLG's 32nd meeting at 5.03pm and thanked CLG members for participating in the tree planting prior to the meeting.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting (2 February 2022)

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 February were adopted without change.

All actions have been completed or were addressed during the meeting. Some outstanding actions will be covered as part of the agenda for future meetings when relevant updates are available.

3. Renewable Energy Initiatives - Tom McAuliffe, Wilmar Sugar Australia Limited

Wilmar Sugar has been using bagasse to power its sugar mills and communities for more than 60 years. Wilmar produces more than 5 million tonnes of bagasse each year, which is more than double that needed to run its mills. However, not all of the balance of energy potential from bagasse generated is exported to the grid due to the availability of surplus electricity from time to time.

Wilmar has been producing bioethanol in its Sarina distillery since 1927. They are the only Queensland-based manufacturer and Australia's largest producer of bioethanol from sugar cane.

Wilmar has developed a circular economy from its own products:

- Molasses is a by-product of sugarcane crushed at its mills
- Ethanol is a by-product of molasses
- Bio Dunder® liquid stockfeed and fertiliser is a co-product of ethanol
- Sugar crops benefit from the use of Bio Dunder®

In the future, Wilmar would like to see more opportunities for their existing products in the biofuel market. Optimising their product use under the current structure is difficult because of the excess solar and wind product available. Wilmar is exploring other opportunities for bioproducts and believes there may be some potential there depending on how the renewable market unfolds in coming years.

DISCUSSION:

Q. Is Bioethanol only produced during the crushing season?

A. Bagasse is only produced during the crushing season, however the generation of power from burning bagasse is ongoing.

Q. Is there potential to add bagasse-generated energy to the grid and support wind and solar?

A. It could certainly be part of the mix. One of the current hurdles is the capital cost associated with installing steam-powered generators compared to installations for wind or solar.

Q. Are any gases given off by the burning of bagasse?

A. There would be some, however Wilmar is compliant with the environmental licensing and

regulations required of the industry. The emissions would be consistent with the burning of any kind of grass fibre.

ADDITIONAL RESPONSE PROVIDED POST-MEETING:

The main gases formed during bagasse combustion include water vapour, carbon dioxide, oxygen, nitrogen, nitrous oxides and sulphur dioxide. The carbon source is classified as biogenic under greenhouse gas reporting protocols so doesn't contribute to reported CO2 emissions. A comparison of the fuel combustion emission factors for bagasse against other solid fuels by the Australian Government's Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources is attached for additional information.

4. Hydrogen Update - Drew Penny, Port of Townsville

Drew Penny presented on a number of proponents investigating hydrogen exports through the Port of Townsville.

The rate of hydrogen projects across the world is growing exponentially. At the beginning of 2021 there were 228 hydrogen projects across the globe. This number had grown to 260 by late-2021.

For all stakeholders, future trade routes are a key consideration. Australia is most likely to export its hydrogen to Asia and parts of Europe.

Some of our advantages include:

- North Queensland is already one of the largest regional export zones in the country
- Origin Energy and Edify Energy have both registered interest in Townsville City Council's Landsdown precinct
- The Port is collaborating with industry and Government on a collaborative approach to optimise North Queensland's hydrogen exporting opportunities while ensuring we are not over capitalising
- The region's research institutions are skilling locals for our hydrogen future eg. TAFE is preparing students to work on Sun Metal's Hyzon trucks.

There are a range of questions that stakeholders are working to address, including:

- What is the hydrogen potential for this region?
- What does the market look like?
- How do we connect the Port to hydrogen production?
- What does the future of hydrogen shipping look like?
- What does a hydrogen Port for Townsville look like?

DISCUSSION:

Q. Don't we need internal combustion engines to see hydrogen as a viable fuel?

A. For vehicles, we are already seeing trucks, buses and fuel cell vehicles being rolled out. However other countries are looking to scale up hydrogen use to fully replace natural gases as an energy source. Hydrogen has been used in industrial applications for more than a century. Our challenge now is to take green hydrogen production to a commercial scale.

Q. What's stopping Japan and other countries from producing and exporting hydrogen?

A. Smaller and/or more densely populated countries don't have the open landmass need to produce green hydrogen at scale. If they had the landmass, they would look to wind and solar farms like Australia has, however without that space, they need to look for ways to import hydrogen power instead. Australia is not alone in its ambition to commercialise green hydrogen production. Saudi Arabia, Canada and Chile also have potential on the global market.

In Queensland, it is not a competition between ports to be *the* hydrogen exporter. The reality is that multiple Queensland ports will one day be exporting hydrogen.

Q. What is the preferred way to get hydrogen to the Port from its point of production?

A. Pipelines are the leading option. Trucking just isn't a viable option at commercial scale, so pipelines will almost certainly be the solution.

Q. Is there potential for hydrogen to power freight trucks and trains?

A. Aurizon is looking into hydrogen for its locomotives. Trains certainly have the capacity to carry their own fuel, so that is a likely prospect. Short haul trucking is also quite viable, and we'll see hydrogen trucks running between Sun Metals' refinery and the Port by the end of the year; however it's a bit more difficult for long-haul trucks. Presently, one of the major challenges is the lack of hydrogen refuelling stations – there are only about eight or nine across Australia. In other countries, such as Japan, where there has been a more immediate push to embrace hydrogen there are already hundreds of refuelling stations. The other challenge is finding suitable hydrogen-fuelled vehicles. Sun Metals put in an exhaustive search for their incoming trucks and one of the things they found is that they were all being designed and built for overseas markets eg. left-hand drive.

5. Update on Investigation into Options for Long-Term Dredge Material Placement Area - Alana O'Brien, Port of Townsville

Alana presented to the group on the Port's current investigations underway into potential alternate long-term sea placement areas for maintenance dredge material.

The Port has had three Dredge Material Placement Areas (DMPAs) since the 1960s. The first was an inshore site that was too shallow and saw resuspended material quickly returned to the channel. The second, used from the 1970s to early 1990s, worked well until the Sea Channel was extended and the site was reassessed for capacity and suitability for capital material. The third, and current site has been in use since 1992.

Ongoing interest and engagement with the Port from several community and environmental stakeholders is now driving the investigation into an alternate DMPA. The Port has engaged Wild Environmental Consultants to undertake a detailed options analysis for a long-term DMPA. The investigation has included reviewing all previous studies and outlining 'no-go' areas dictated by several criteria including:

- Sensitive receptors
- Resuspension rates
- Depth contours

- Dredge cycle time (the further the dredge must go, the greater the emissions associated with placement); and
- Vessel traffic

Wild then determined a series of selection criteria and scored the remaining potential sites against these. This has resulted in six initial options: five sites within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and one in the Port exclusion zone.

The next steps are for the Port to conduct stakeholder engagement and for Wild to finalise their report. The Port will then develop a road map for proceeding with an alternate DMPA, if it is found to have a net environmental benefit.

DISCUSSION:

Q. Has there been any investigation into bringing all dredge material to land?

A. The Port places approximately 450,000 cubic metres of maintenance dredge material from the shipping channel/ inner harbour into the current DMPA each year. The Port also dredges the Ross River navigational channel down to the bridge, most of which is sand that comes to land for use beneficial reuse – which includes beach renourishment.

Dredge material from the channel is silty with limited engineering properties and the material has high salt content. Taking the material elsewhere has significant environmental implications of introducing foreign, highly salty matter to another location. By placing maintenance dredge material at sea, we are placing like material with like material. To date all possible options that have been investigated to bring this material to land are technically, environmentally and commercially not feasible.

Q. Why can't you use maintenance material to reclaim land, as we are doing with capital material from the Channel Upgrade project?

A. The capital dredge material from the CU project is an excavator cut method to fill our new 62ha reclaim area. There is no capacity to place maintenance material in the same location. The material being removed for maintenance dredging is not compacted seabed, rather silty sediments using a suction method, which involves large volumes of ocean water. The scale of land reclamation to bring this volume of water and material to land makes it impractical.

Q. Does the Port conduct maintenance dredging every year?

A. Yes. The seaward end of the Sea Channel is mostly self-scouring, so we don't have to do so much at that end. Most of the material settles at the inshore end of the Platypus Channel. The TSHD Brisbane dredge completes our maintenance dredging, as it does for Ports up and down the coast, to maintain safe navigable depths. The annual campaign for the TSHD Brisbane in Townsville is generally undertaken once a year (sometimes a split campaign is needed) and is conducted over a four-week period (anywhere between 3 and 5 weeks generally).

ACTION: Share the Alternate DMPA Investigation report with the CLG once it is completed.

6. Community Fund Update – Kim Wheatley, Port of Townsville

The Port of Townsville's second annual Community Fund closed for applications on 24 April. The response increased on last year, with a total of 36 applications requesting more than \$212,000 received.

The Community Fund panel will now review and score all applications. Hoping to be in a position to advise applicants of the outcome by the end of May.

7. Port Updates

Channel Upgrade Project:

The Woomera started channel widening on 15 March 2022. There have been a few setbacks, mostly due to unfavourable environmental conditions, but the works have resumed and Hall are starting to achieve good dredging production rates.

ACTION: The Port will provide a CU update at the next CLG meeting.

Dry Tropics Partnership for Healthy Waters

The Port is now hosting the Partnership for the next two years. Three staff started a couple of weeks ago and they are currently preparing the technical data for the 2020/21 Report Card.

Lucinda Land Use Plan

The Lucinda Land Use Plan is now out for public consultation. The Townsville Land Use Plan will follow later this year.

Cruise

Cruising has recommenced and the Port of Townsville has four cruises booked for the end of this year, as well as hosting the Australian Cruise Association "Cruise Down Under" Conference in September. Bookings for 2023-25 are looking strong. Carnival Cruises is now home-porting at the new Brisbane Cruise Terminal, which is great news for Queensland.

8. Around the Table & General Business

Q: What's happening with the HMAS Townsville?

A. The Port is investigating placing the HMAS Townsville at the old slipway site in Ross Creek with new public realm improvements. There remains quite a bit of remediation work to be done before the area could be used for public access.

Sharon: Sharon has been busy representing VRM Biologik at several Field Days.

The Ocean Sentinels exhibit at the Museum of Tropical Queensland is well worth a visit. The works are on display until 15 May.

Brittany: Coastal Dry Tropics Landcare will hold the Official Opening of their Bush Garden Nursery on 22 May. Everyone is welcome.

Keith: A new wind farm is proposed for the Wet Tropics which will see the clearing of a biodiverse forest to allow for transportation of the wind turbines to site. The plan is for the cleared forest to then be revegetated. Terrain NRM is in discussions with the Government about whether this fast-track approach to renewable energy targets is the best in the long run. Revegetation of a forest of this kind would typically cost \$30-\$50,000/hectare, however the budget has only outlined \$15,000/hectare.

Craig: Townsville City Council is considering a development application for gas tanks to be installed at the end of Tully Street, South Townsville. A petition against this proposal is currently circulating. The main concern is that the storage is in a zoned light industrial area, but close to a residential area and Townsville South School.

Townsville Aquatic Precinct now has a project manager on board and is seeking community feedback on how to promote Cleveland Bay as a world-class arena for sailing, powerboats, stand-up paddleboarding and more.

Elaine: The Port will have a presence at the upcoming EcoFiesta on 4 & 5 June.

Meeting closed at 6.27pm

Next CLG Meeting scheduled for 3 August 2022.