

Gerroa Sand Resource Community Consultative Committee

Minutes of the Meeting of the Gerroa Sand Resource CCC

Held on: 29/8/2024 – 10:43am

At: Gerroa Fishermans Club, Gerroa

Chaired by: Mr Brian Weir PSM

Attended

Mr Kel Sekulic, Community Representative

Mr Warren Holder, GEPS Representative

Cr Mark Croxford, Kiama Municipal Council Representative

Mr Todd Kalajzich, Cleary Bros Representative

Mr Mark Hammond, Cleary Bros Representative

Mr Ashley Mathie, Cleary Bros (Observer)

Apologies

Mr Stephen Brazier, Community Representative

Declarations of interest

The usual interests being Messrs Hammond and Kalajzich being employees of Cleary Bros, and the Chairperson being paid a meeting fee, were declared.

Agenda item discussion

Item 1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chairperson opened the meeting and welcomed all Members and acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the Land on which the meeting was being held and paid his respects to Elders Past, Present and Emerging.

The Chairperson acknowledged the usual declarations of interest being Messrs Hammond and Kalajzich as employees of Cleary Bros, the Chairperson as paid a meeting fee.

Item 2. Business Arising from previous meetings dated 15 February 2024

No matters raised.

Item 3. Correspondence

No correspondence sent or received.

Item 4. Cleary Bros reports and overview of activities

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The Chairperson invited Mr Hammond to speak to the report, and invited comment and feedback from committee members on each item in turn.

In regards to the Progress of the Project, Mr Hammond stated that archaeological surveys recommenced this week as water levels have dropped low enough to restart in some areas.

Cr Croxford asked how long the water level has taken to subside.

Mr Hammond stated that it dropped only very slowly, and in some parts water was still being encountered around 40cm below the ground surface.

In relation to the section on meteorology, Mr Sekulic noted that he had recorded (approximately) 1300 mm of rain this year so far on his property.

Mr Hammond noted that this aligns well with the 2,006 mm recorded since July last year, with the majority of this total since November 2023.

In relation to the section on Air Quality, Cr Croxford asked whether there was much sand loss during periods of strong winds such as experienced yesterday.

Mr Kalajzich stated that stockpiles are kept reasonably small, and stockpiles are wet, so that losses are minimal.

Mr Holder commented that most sand movements are just along the ground, however in conditions like yesterday's wind the sand from the beach was being carried high in the air.

In relation to the section on Surface Water, Mr Hammond provided additional comment on the low pH recorded in the new dredge pond, and that a trigger has also now been set up for water level in the new pond, to ensure the water level stays above an area of risk.

Mr Mathie explained the use of lime to bring pH levels back to normal, and that 20 bags of lime are currently kept on hand in case they need to be used quickly. Mr Mathie confirmed that to date the new dredge pond had only needed to be treated once so far.

Mr Hammond commented on observations of the water level variations at the Blue Angle Creek monitor. This included daily fluctuations associated with larger tides, while it stayed fairly level during smaller tides and pH often declined at these times as water drained from Foys Swamp. There would often be a fast rise followed by steady fall following rainfall which would dominate the tidal influences. Also in early August there was a steady rise followed by a sharp fall, which likely related to a bar forming over the Crooked River entrance before it overflowed and opened up again.

Mr Brazier, in an email forwarded to the Chairperson prior to the meeting, had requested Cleary Bros give a progress report on the woody weed growth eradication along the zones adjacent Crooked River Rd and Beach Rd, including zone 2A1, as discussed at the last meeting in February.

Mr Brazier also requested an update on previous plans to outsource weeding to a contractor and whether this has been possible.

Mr Mathie noted that the rainfall over the past 6 months had made efforts to control woody weeds difficult, especially over the winter period where plants do not tend to take up herbicide as they are not growing so much. However with the recent drier weather and entering Spring, this would be a focus again in coming months.

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Mr Hammond added that Cleary Bros had engaged teams from bush regeneration specialist Goodbush to undertake around 100 hours of dedicated lantana control last month around the south and southwest parts of the old dredge pond.

Mr Mathie added that they are looking to use a small excavator to remove some of the denser patches of lantana from the eastern parts, which will allow follow weed control by a ground team.

Mr Kalajzich noted that Cleary Bros had advertised for a part time position focused on bush regeneration, however this was put on hold due to the weather, and would be reconsidered in coming months.

Mr Holder asked about the potential to involve persons from Jerrinja to undertake weed control works.

Mr Mathie responded that this has been discussed with Jerrinja, but they advised that they don't have the staff with their other priorities at the moment to provide assistance. CB will keep this possibility open in the event they have available resources in the future.

Mr Holder suggested that Gerard Proust is a good local option for bush regeneration works.

Mr Hammond added that revegetation priorities for next 12 months are included in the Annual Review, and focus on the maintenance and establishment of the tree screen and weed control on the eastern and north eastern parts of the site.

Mr Sekulic asked how the tree screen was going.

Mr Mathie responded that the tree screen suffered quite a lot of losses as it was affected by flooding in recent months. CB will be replacing plants that did not survive in coming months.

In regards to the section on Cultural Heritage, Mr Hammond explained the circumstances for the cultural heritage non-compliance, including the 20 metre buffer zone around each designated test pit site, and that the excavation for the flood bund had been within this buffer area, not directly affecting any test pit site. Mr Hammond reiterated that Cleary Bros were working closely with Jerrinja and the archaeologists to improve recovery of artefacts.

Mr Kalajzich elaborated that the buffer area was established so that test pits could be enlarged if a lot of artefacts were identified within any pit. This also meant that an axe-head was recovered that would probably otherwise have been lost.

Mr Holder asked what happens to the items recovered.

Mr Hammond responded that this will be in line with the management plan. They are retained by the archaeologist, and then will be managed in line with an agreement with Jerrinja, whether that is reburial or retention by Jerrinja for training and education purposes.

Item 5. Other Agenda Items

a) 2023/24 Gerroa Sand Resource Annual Review

All representatives acknowledged they had received a copy of the Annual Review and no representatives wished for a hard copy at this time.

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Cr Croxford advised that the report had originally been directed to spam by the Council email system, however had been released from spam and received this morning.

Mr Hammond advised that he had forwarded copies of the Annual Review document to Kiama and Shoalhaven Councils.

Item 6. General Business

Cr Croxford stated that with the upcoming local council elections, this could be his last meeting of the CCC as Kiama Municipal Council representative.

Mr Hammond thanked Cr Croxford for his contribution to the CCC over the past few years. The Chairperson also expressed his thanks.

Cr Croxford stated that the Council representative would likely be endorsed by Council in November or December following the local government elections, and Council would advise of the selected representative at that time.

The Chairperson raised the following governance matters:

1. CCC Annual Report effectiveness of the committee – The Annual Report requires a discussion on the effectiveness of the committee. The Chairperson will invite all members to advise on their impressions on the effectiveness of the committee, which will be considered by the Chairperson for inclusion in the draft annual report.

The Members briefly responded to the Chairperson's remarks by expressing their satisfaction with the Committee's current method of operations.

2. CCC Annual Report – The Chairperson stated that, once he has finalised the 'effectiveness of the committee' matter, he will circulate the draft annual report on the CCC to all members for comment. Once comments are received, the Chairperson will consider the comments, finalise it and send it to the Department for endorsement and receive permission for it to be publicised.

No further general business was raised by any members.

Item 7. Next Meeting

Mr Hammond suggested that the next meeting be held on Thursday February 13, 2025, and include a site visit.

Meeting concluded 11:33am

Action Items

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Action	Responsible	Status
Chairperson to write to members inviting comment on the effectiveness of the committee.	Chairperson	
Chairperson to complete draft Annual Report following consultation with members.	Chairperson	

Other comments

Nil

Upcoming meetings

Thursday February 13 2025 10:30am at the Gerroa Sand Resource site office. Please wear enclosed shoes, long sleeve shirt and long pants.

Item 4 – Gerroa Sand Resource CCC Meeting 29th August 2024

Cleary Bros reports and overview of activities

Progress of the Project

Total sand transported from the Gerroa resource in FY24 was 79,591 tonnes. Cleary Bros continue to supplement the Gerroa sand supply with manufactured sand produced at our Albion Park Quarry. A small quantity of sand was sourced from a 3rd party in June 2024 to ensure production did not exceed production limit. Production rate is expected to continue close to the upper production limit of 80,000t/year. Sand is currently being produced from the modification area.

Since the last regular CCC meeting in February 2024, the following non-routine activities have been undertaken:

- Commencement of archaeological salvage program. Program has been suspended due to rainfall through May-June raising the water table and flooding test pits.
- Establishment of flood mitigation bunds around western areas.

Upcoming works associated with the modification area include:

- Completion of archaeological salvage program.

Site Visit

A site visit was held last meeting. No site visit is planned for this meeting.

Monitoring and environmental performance

Meteorology

The Automatic weather station (AWS) was upgraded to 4G telemetry since the last meeting. As part of this upgrade, the logger, cabinet, and internal wiring were all replaced. There were some issues with condensation during the upgrade which resulted in corrosion of connectors and loss of some data, but this has now been fixed, with no ongoing issues.

Rainfall recorded for FY24 was 2006 mm which is well above the annual average. Rainfall from January to April was generally close to average, with May and June well above average with 453mm recorded in May and 329mm in June. As a result of rainfall in these months, the ground water level has increased significantly, with ground conditions still fairly wet in August despite lower rainfall since these months.

Noise

The 2024 annual noise monitoring was undertaken in June 2024. Noise levels were monitored in line with the Noise Monitoring Plan at the 6 nominated locations around the quarry, during normal operations. Quarry-related noise was not audible at any of the 6 locations.

All measurements of noise are within the criteria of the Development Consent.

Air Quality

Average annual dust levels in all gauges are currently below or consistent with the historical averages for each site. Dust gauges 1A, 2A, and 4A are averaging 1.3g/m²/month, 0.8g/m²/month, and 0.5g/m²/month respectively for the previous 12-month period.

All measurements of air quality are within the criteria of the Development Consent and Environment Protection Licence for the Quarry.

Surface Water and Acid Sulphate Soils

All monitoring of the dredge pond has been in accordance with the Development Consent.

The existing dredge pond has shown reasonably stable pH levels, varying between 7.3 and 8.0 over the past 12 months, with the deeper pH probe generally reading slightly higher, suggesting the acid sulphate soil treatment has been effective. Alerts are set up on the automatic monitoring station to record any low readings.

The pH of the new dredge pond has generally varied between 6.8 and 7.5 during the past 12 months, however one instance of lower pH (to 5.8) was identified during May 2024. Following this measurement, the new dredge pond was treated with hydrated lime from the on site stockpile in line with the Acid Sulphate Soil Management Plan requirements, and water level raised, with the pH returning to above the 6.5 lower action level in following days. Continued monitoring has shown that the treatment has been effective, with pH in recent months stable at a neutral pH of 6.8-6.9.

Water levels in both ponds have increased with the higher rainfall in May and June 2024, and remain relatively high.

The Blue Angle Creek floodgate surface monitoring site has shown considerable variability, due to a combination of rainfall runoff, tidal influences, and what looks to have been a bar across the Crooked River mouth for 2 weeks in early August 2024. Water levels change significantly following rainfall, with smaller daily changes distinguishable, which are related to the effects of ocean tides. pH levels have also fluctuated, with stability around neutral pH levels observed during drier periods, and greater variability observed following small rainfall events. During higher rainfall events, there is a consistent pattern of lower pH water flowing out from Foys Swamp, with pH dropping to between 6.0 and 6.5 following these rainfall events.

Monitoring of the processed sand has shown low but detectable concentrations of oxidisable sulphur, which will continue to be monitored monthly to manage acid sulphate soil risk. Monthly and quarterly sampling of the 5 surface water monitoring sites has shown concentrations of some dissolved metals above the interim trigger values for individual months, however these reflect the baseline for these sites. This is particularly the case for the Blue Angle Creek upstream and downstream sites, where the baseline water quality of these sites is above the interim triggers. The Water Management Plan will be updated shortly to include revised trigger levels reflective of the baseline environment.

Groundwater

All groundwater monitoring has been in accordance with the Development Consent. Borehole levels have generally increased significantly since November 2023, in response to higher rainfall across the monitoring network since this time.

Groundwater quality is relatively stable, with a brackish influence noted in the bore close to Blue Angle Creek northeast of the new dredge pond, as well as the background bore located approximately one kilometre west of the new dredge pond. Other bores close to Blue Angle Creek exhibit very low salinity levels.

Rehabilitation and Revegetation

Rehabilitation works are now in the maintenance phase.

The vegetation screen along the western limit of the modification area has been planted out in its entirety, with maintenance of this zone continuing as required. Cleary Bros has been in discussion with Jerrinja LALC regarding sourcing tubestock from their new nursery, which will be used for infill planting of this and other areas once stock becomes available.

Otherwise, weed control works since the last meeting have focused on lantana control principally along the sides of access tracks, as well as around the southernmost part of the site and into the Crooked River Road corridor. The focus entering the spring growth period will be to continue to focus on this area, as well as controlling any isolated growth in other areas to prevent its establishment in these areas.

Cultural Heritage

Cleary Bros notified the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) of a non-conformance with the requirements of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan (ACHMP) in April 2024. This relates to the excavation of material for a flood mitigation bund in the buffer area around the test excavation area prior to the completion of salvage works. The excavation did not impact on the salvage test pits themselves and has provided an opportunity to gain additional information on the history of the site. Cleary Bros continues to engage with Jerrinja LALC and the archaeologists from Biosis, and have prepared an updated ACHMP to improve the clarity of the plan and provide additional provisions for archaeological investigations.

Community Complaints

No community complaints have been received since the last CCC meeting.

Information provided to the community and any feedback

The Cleary Bros website is regularly updated to ensure all required information is current, including approvals, management plans, and environmental monitoring data.

Cleary Bros recommends the above report is received and noted by the CCC.

Signed:

Mark Hammond (Environmental Officer)

21/8/2024