

MT. SHAMROCK QUARRY
ENVIRONMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE
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Meeting Summary

21st February 2024 (4.07pm – 6.15pm)

Committee Members

Present:

Leigh Elliott
Nathan Thomas

Holcim Australia

Joy Carberry
Don Petty
Neville Bassett

Local Community Representatives

Marcelle Bell

Cardinia Shire Council

Apologies:

Barry Strong

Earth Resources Regulation

Cr Brett Owen

Cardinia Shire Council

Stewart Burton

Holcim Australia

Chairperson:

Lisa Barrant

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Welcome

Committee members were welcomed to the meeting, including Marcelle Bell (Coordinator of Planning Strategy and Urban Design) as the new representative from the Shire of Cardinia. Apologies were also noted from Barry Strong and Councillor Brett Owen.

After an Acknowledgement of Country, the agenda was reviewed and the item regarding end use of the quarry deferred until May; and an item added relating to a resource investigation project announcement by Holcim.

Update on actions agreed at previous meetings

Person
Responsible

Action 50.2 Groundwater and Springs (Item brought forward from May – July 2021)

As part of the EMP requirements, an annual review of groundwater and springs is undertaken over summer. During discussion about the 2019 results, there were questions about the connection between the operations of the quarry and the changing flows of the springs. As there were no experts at the meeting to assist with clarifying and interpreting the data it was agreed that Matt seek further advice and report back to the Committee. The key question of interest relates to what the causes for changing flow rates of the springs might be.

The recommendations from the GHD report have now been added to the Consultant Recommendations register and will be monitored as part of that process. It was agreed by the Committee that this item was now considered complete and could be removed from the agenda.

Environment Management Quarterly Report (including consultant recommendations)

Leigh talked to the key highlights in the quarterly report from the period covering October – December 2023. Priority points and discussion included the following:

- There were no non-compliances or complaints during the reporting period. (Leigh advised the Committee of two turbidity exceedences that occurred in January this year that will be reported formally in the next quarterly report).
- One of the annual goals contained within the EMP relates to Green house gas emissions and a target of reducing these by 3% year on year. The 2023 result was noted as being a .31% reduction year on year, which falls short of the 3%, however Leigh pointed out the complexity and variability of this number when there were extended periods of stripping included in the reporting period. Stripping is an activity that uses significantly more diesel. If the stripping component of diesel were excluded from the 2023 calculation, then the year-on-year reduction would have been approximately 11%. Leigh will discuss this item with the auditors. The Committee was advised that Holcim acquires approximately 17% of energy from renewable sources nationally but that the EMP does not have any requirement for carbon offsets. A new hybrid face loader is also due soon which is expected to have an impact on fuel usage.
- Further waste surveys are being undertaken to reduce waste and have led to changes such as e-waste recycling on site and investigating air filter recycling etc.
- The Committee also noted the quite divergent and variable ground water levels around March 2023 as shown in the report. This will be captured and reported on in the annual Groundwater and Spring report due for discussion at the May 2024 meeting.
- The Committee were reminded that the annual EMP audit was taking place next week and that members could contact the auditor directly to share any concerns or questions.

Other business

Action 69.1 Land Rehabilitation Management Plan – Annual review

As part of the EMP requirements, an annual review of the LRMP is required. This annual review includes the step of consulting with the ERC regarding any proposed changes. The last annual audit noted that this had not happened, and a process is being in place to address this.

Leigh talked the Committee through the need for a process for reviewing and documenting ongoing improvements to the LRMP. In short, a system of capturing ongoing practical changes and improvements was needed in addition to the 5 yearly EMP review process. Leigh will discuss with the EMP auditor and come back to the committee in May with a proposed approach for ERC comment.

Holcim will also bring forward to the May meeting a few proposed minor changes to the actual content of the LRMP for the Committees review. Committee members are encouraged to review these and also consider any other changes they consider important as part of the LRMP.

Leigh Elliott
All Committee
members

Resource investigation project

Nathan informed the Committee that Holcim will be undertaking a drilling program in the northeast area of the quarry site over the coming weeks. Holcim is conducting the drilling to better understand the quantity, quality and viability of material in the area, including the depth of overburden. The drilling area will be inside the approved work authority boundary and outside the approved extraction limit. It is expected that the drilling will take approximately 2 weeks to complete and be followed by a technical assessment of the extracted cores. Holcim hopes to have a high-level understanding of the results by May. Depending upon the findings from the drilling process, Holcim may decide to proceed with undertaking technical investigations to assess the various impacts (groundwater, noise, dust and so forth) of potentially quarrying this resource with a view to, if considered viable, making an application to the Minister to permit extraction.

Nathan talked through the Holcim communication plan for the drilling project which includes: Direct contact with close neighbours, an information letter drop to properties within a 1km radius of the quarry (“Community Update” is attached to this summary), making this same document available on the ERC website, and ongoing and transparent communication with the ERC. Matt Dodd, the former quarry manager for Mt Shamrock is managing this project.

Although the transparency and direct communication from Nathan regarding the project was appreciated and noted, Holcims’ drilling plans and intentions were received with significant disappointment and concern by the Community Representatives. Disappointment was expressed that previous indications to the community of the probable life of the quarry were now not seen as being credible and that there had been a belief that the quarry would cease operating within the next 5 – 7 years subject to sales demand etc.

There was also a view from the Community Representatives that even though quarry operators had been successful in accessing resource areas as part of the 1999 – 2005 extension permit process, Holcim was now potentially trying to quarry the area that had been specifically excised from the extraction limit as part of that earlier planning decision. At the time, this area had apparently been considered not viable.

There was discussion by the Committee about what Holcims next steps would be if the initial drilling results were found to be favourable, the practical challenges of quarrying this area with regard to the proximity to other land holders etc and what the decision-making process had been internally at Holcim to get to this point. It was agreed that it will be beneficial to have the results of the drilling exploration reviewed and Holcim’s intentions understood as soon as possible.

Lisa also noted the importance of working to preserve the strong and productive working relationships that have been built and exist across the Committee as it engages with future discussions about this announcement. Nathan will update the Committee at the May meeting.

Meeting dates

Lisa confirmed that the third meeting for this year would take place on the 21st of August and not during September as previously advised.

Actions arising

**Person
Responsible**

There were no specific actions arising.

Meeting dates for 2024

The following Committee meeting dates remain for 2024 with meetings commencing at 4pm.

- Wednesday 22nd May 2024 (including site tour for local residents)
- Wednesday 21st August 2024
- Wednesday 20th November 2024 (including Committee site tour)

Items for consideration at next revision of EMP

There are currently no items identified.