

## MINUTES

### PORT OF NEWCASTLE COMMUNITY LIAISON GROUP

**Date:** Monday 15 February 2021, 5.30PM

**Location:** Travelodge Newcastle

**Chair:** Sarah Kiely, Port of Newcastle Communications and Community Relations Manager

#### Attendees

Community representatives	Port of Newcastle representatives
John McLeod – Newcastle Rowing Club	Craig Carmody – Chief Executive Officer
Rick Banyard – Correct Planning & Consultation for Mayfield Group	Glen Hayward – Executive Manager Marine and Operations
Graham Harde – Carrington Community Council	Tanya McDonald – Executive Manager Corporate Affairs and Strategy
Nick Moretti – Koppers	Jennifer Anderson – Senior Manager Property, Environment and Planning
John Thacker – Newcastle West Community Group	Scott Bacon – Asset Manager
Amy De Lore – Hunter Business Chamber	Gabriella Sainsbury – Deputy General Counsel
John Hayes - Correct Planning & Consultation for Mayfield Group	Ashden Saeger – Commercial Manager
Dallas Fletcher – Honeysuckle resident	Ross Cadell – Special Projects Director
Ryan Duckmanton – Stolthaven	Sam Collyer – Senior Manager Corporate Communications
Lyn Kilby – Greater Lifestyles of Wickam Group	Sarah Kiely – Communications and Community Relations Manager
Dave Williams – Stockton resident	
Richard Howard – Clark Shipping	
Chris Northam – Tim Crakanthorp’s office	
Robert Aitchison – All Australian Adventures	

#### General Business

##### Welcome and introductions

- Meeting commenced at 5.39pm
- Sarah Kiely (SK) welcomed attendees
- SK began the meeting by acknowledging the Awakabal people as the Traditional Owners of the land on which the meeting was held, paying respect to Elders past, present and future
- SK noted apologies received from: Clare Monkley, Paul O’Rourke, Trudie Larnach, Ashlee Abbott, Richard Finlay-Jones, Bruce Cooper, Greg Gocher.
- Port of Newcastle (PON) representatives were introduced and the format of the meeting was outlined

##### Review of action items

Nil to review

##### PON Operations update – Glen Hayward, Executive Manager Marine & Operations

- GH noted that feral cats on Stockton breakwall was a long-running issue
- GH noted that PON had obligations to provide safe public access to the breakwalls as per the 98-year lease

- He noted multiple complaints received from community members, local political representatives and other parties regarding the health risks, environmental damage and public amenity concerns created by the cats, particularly the growth in cat numbers
- PON had a long history of trying to find a solution along with other parties, including City of Newcastle
- Scott Bacon (SB) confirmed that PON went through a process of assessing the risks and consulting with expert providers to recommend a safe and effective path forward
- SB noted that aspects of the 16 December animal control activity did not go to plan and that this was being investigated
- Lyn Kilby (LK) discussed her experience in Dubbo where cats were being abandoned, noting that this was also happening in Newcastle
- LK expressed concern about community-wide efforts to manage roaming cats, noting the prevalence of feral and stray cats across Newcastle, including in drains and in public areas, and the absence of a broader plan to manage the issue
- LK suggested that irresponsible cat owners and other interested parties were contributing to serious health and safety issues for the whole community and poor environmental outcomes, recommending that PON engage with other parties beyond the port boundary to address this issue.
- Ross Cadell (RC) raised NSW Government grant program recently announced to address feral cats. The grants are worth approximately \$90,000. PON has now spoken with Member for Newcastle Tim Crakanthorp and City of Newcastle to support the city's application to this program.
- RC noted that the grants program was managed through the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment with involvement from the RSPCA.
- Chris Northam (CN) said Mr Crakanthorp's office would look into the grants program.
- LK asked CN to ensure that, if Newcastle is granted funds for feral cat control programs, that the funds are spent promptly.
- SK noted that PON took the matter of feral cat management very seriously
- John Thacker referred to posters on Gordon Avenue in Hamilton regarding cats, critical of PON
- Dallas Fletcher (DF) raised concerns about other feral cats around the old Maritime Museum and Honeysuckle area, noting that cats were a broader community concern and not isolated to Stockton breakwall
- Rick Banyard (RB) raised concerns around animals such as rats in the area around Horseshoe Beach, noting it was an emotive issue for many community members and that this made it difficult to deal with these serious health and environmental issues.

### **PON CEO Update – Craig Carmody (CC) – Chief Executive Officer**

- CC thanked members for attending and their interest in the Port
- CC mentioned recent media coverage and interested in trade with China, noting that Queensland coal ports were more affected by the trade disruption
- CC referred to PON's December volumes and confirmed that there was no coal trade to China in December, January or the first half of February
- CC provided the group with an update on January trade, which showed near-record throughput for the month, including noticeable increases in trade to other markets
- CC discussed recent media coverage about PON's refinancing, confirming that ANZ had previously been the lead bank in carrying PON's debts
- CC said PON's approach to refinancing the debt was designed to accommodate ANZ's requirements and that there had been considerable effort to comply with its requirements.
- CC said PON was disappointed that ANZ had declined to participate given the efforts that went into meeting its criteria, but confirmed that NAB had stepped in and was working closely with PON
- CC reminded the group about PON's sustainability initiatives and confirmed that, as its ESG strategy was initiated some time ago, refinancing was occurring despite the currently difficult funding environment
- CC said PON was looking at new ways to fund the port in future

### **PON Operations Update – Glen Hayward (GH) – Executive Manager Marine & Operations**

- GH provided an update regarding roll-on, roll-off (ro-ro) shipping, saying PON was looking to provide more innovative options for cargo owners using this type of service
- GH noted the return of ro-ro ships in 2020 and that PON was looking to make this a permanent service
- GH said PON was working with big companies to grow the ro-ro trade – an example being large trays at West Basin
- GH said PON was in a strong position to provide a competitive and sustainable service, with the emphasis on the Carrington precinct
- GH noted there was another large ro-ro ship expected in the week 21-27 February
- GH noted 400 intermodal wagons – Varley bringing in – 4 shipment of 100 of these wagons.
- Rail imports through West Basin into Bathurst
- GH said this was an example of the diversification plan underway to grow trade and make it sustainable
- GH also provided an update on the *David Allan* drydocking completed in 2020, noting that this vessel was the last built in Newcastle and that it had shown itself to be well-built and in good condition despite its age
- GH said the \$4.1 million drydocking work was delivered on-time and on-budget
- GH said the *David Allan* work was conducted by Harwood Marine, a regional company based in Yamba
- GH said PON chose Harwood over competitors in Sydney, noting the strong emphasis on safety

### **Additional PON CEO Update – Craig Carmody (CC) – Chief Executive Officer**

- CC referred to PON's agile work arrangements and noted they were working well
- CC said employees now chose where they worked, contrary to other companies that have insisted on people being in the office more than necessary
- CC said PON would review its arrangements relative to morale, productivity and work-life balance in the middle of the year, but noted the benefits were clear at this stage
- CC said PON was attracting a high-calibre of candidates for jobs, unlike previous years

### **Simon Byrnes (CC) – Chief Commercial Officer**

- CC asked SB to provide an update on hydrogen opportunities for Newcastle
- SB noted that Newcastle has been an important energy hub for a long time, with coal to be a key part of that for the foreseeable future, but with new forms of energy flowing through the port alongside it
- SB referred to recent positive announcement about the "Hunter cluster" for hydrogen development – the only region in NSW to be nominated
- SB referred to University of Newcastle, which is leading the local plan to be a hub for this technology
- SB noted the growing interest and progress in hydrogen technology around the world
- SB said government funding associated with hydrogen was modest but kept the region's plans moving
- SB noted broad support from government to look at adjoining infrastructure and planning approvals
- SB said the focus was on collaboration, scalability and synergies
- SB said PON was one of 14 parties involved, with each bringing different skills and experience
- SB said the group was engaging with a number of parties, with the immediate focus on green hydrogen production at a small scale – potentially solar and battery-powered installations – for domestic industries around the port
- SB said in future, this might become an export operation
- LK asked SB how PON would link with other ports
- SB noted the work being done overseas, with the focus on creating relationships with ports – such as Antwerp and Rotterdam – to see what was possible in Newcastle
- SB said the Hunter group was not looking at international exports at the moment, with the focus on starting local in industries between Newcastle and Williamstown, with a view to looking at international opportunities in the future

- SB said Newcastle had a strong reputation as an energy port and that existing customers were interested in the role the port could play in hydrogen
- SB noted that hydrogen is difficult to transport – it is unclear how to do that safely and efficiently, but there was a big opportunity to turn solar-powered production into hydrogen production
- SB said the Lower Hunter was well-placed due to the available transmission infrastructure and potential for synergies between projects
- Amy De Lore (ADL) noted there was an event on 26 February regarding hydrogen opportunities and the potential for the Hunter – details available for members interested

### Questions

**Q:** LK – Asked about the progress of the Inland Rail link

**A:** RC noted announcements by Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack regarding improved connections to the Inland Rail. He noted that additional funding meant the Narrabri to Hunter connection would be 25-tonne axle weight, after which it would be 30-tonnes as part of the coal network. He noted that Newcastle was unique for this level of connection to the Inland Rail. RC also noted that NSW Government funding had been provided to provide a business case for another connection between Maryvale and Gulgong, which would improve existing connections to Central NSW. If this line was upgraded, it would complement services to Western Sydney. RC noted support from Tim Crakenthorp (Newcastle State MP) and Sharon Claydon (Newcastle Federal MP) on these projects to improve the supply chain irrespective of political allegiances.

**Q:** RB – Argued that double-stacking should be used to connect the Inland Port of Narrabri to the Port of Newcastle. RB said that double-stacked containers from Narrabri to the Port of Newcastle would enable the port to better connect directly with Brisbane, Adelaide, Melbourne and Perth. RB said that he understood the coal tracks to Muswellbrook provided for 40 tonne axle loadings and believed that this should be extended to cater for newer coal mines in the area. RB advised the meeting that he had written a letter to Deputy Prime Minister McCormack seeking to have the rail line from the Port of Newcastle to the Inland Port of Narrabri be capable of double stacking with an axle loading of 40 tonnes. RB offered to provide a copy of his letter for distribution to the Liaison group with the minutes.

**A:** CC said PON would talk about Inland Rail connections, including the importance of the infrastructure to PON's plans, at a future meeting.

### Modern Slavery Act update – Gabriella Sainsbury (GS) – Deputy General Counsel

- GS briefly outlined the new Modern Slavery Act affecting Australian businesses, including PON
- PON has established an internal Modern Slavery Task Force which has developed and implemented a cohesive plan.
- GS said PON's Board and Executive were committed to a meaningful response, not just compliance based approach
- GS said PON would shortly publish a modern slavery statement, including investigations into risks in its supply chain
- GS said PON expected to keep improving each year and would be engaging with suppliers to improve in this area

**Q:** RH – Does it extend to customers?

**A:** GS – It has quite a broad definition, covering PON's operations and supply chains, and we are looking at what PON can influence/control. The compliance component is based on addressing questions. PON is looking to be more comprehensive than merely meeting the minimum requirements of lodging a statement.

**Q:** RH – Where are the Modern Slavery risks for PON?

**A:** GS – PON is investigating its exposure to high-risk industries and focusing on those clusters first. It will then be looking at lower-risk industries. A risk rating is formulated using recognised risk indexes that analyse geographic and industry related modern slavery risks.

**Q:** LK – Asked if international seafarers were captured by this legislation?

**A:** GS – While seafarers are not within PON's control, the organisation has been working with vessel agents. GS noted that the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) takes the lead on seafarer welfare issues, but that PON is supporting the Mission to Seafarers in advocating on the issue.

GH confirmed that PON had facilitated access to enable seafarers to receive dental and medical care and was working with the government to bring about a solution, noting different state-based approaches made it difficult. GH confirmed that it was a poor outcome for seafarers to be unable to leave the vessel. PON is working with local health, police and other authorities to provide a workable solution to a difficult issue. PON was represented on the Port Welfare Committee. GH said some seafarers were on the vessel for 12-14 months, but would not be paid when not on the ship and not paid during any COVID-19 quarantine periods. PON was also cognisant of crew changeover periods, that new crews needed to be in quarantine before coming onboard and that berth availability made it difficult to do crew changes in the port itself.

## Other business

### PON Community update - Sarah Kiely (SK)

- SK noted four \$5000 donations made by PON in late 2020. The four recipients were Beyond Blue, Ronald McDonald House, AIME and Hunter Wildlife.
- SK noted the appreciation of these charity partners leading into Christmas and confirmed the move was aligned with PON's workplace giving program.
- SK noted that PON was now a sponsor of the Newcastle Jets.
- SK noted that PON's Sponsorship program for 2021 was pushed back a few months due to delays in the 2020 program stemming from COVID. PON will start the 2021 round later in 2021.
- SK – Noted upcoming Hunter Hurricanes event.
- SK – Noted the Newcastle Port Community Contribution Fund announcement last week, including a number of local projects. PON supportive of the projects being funded through the program.
- SK advised the group that the Carrington Hydraulic Engine House grounds were opened mid-December and the project was receiving strongly-positive feedback from the community.

**Q:** RH – How did the Port set a record January given the disruption to shiploader at NCIG?

**A:** GH confirmed that there was pressure on the supply chain, but that flexibility between coal terminal operators meant the shiploader disruption was being well-managed. GH said PWCS had offset some of the disruption and that NCIG was still maximising its terminal operations despite the unavailability of the damaged loader. PON's focus was on optimising the scheduling to maximise port efficiency.

CC additionally noted that the Hunter Valley Coal Chain Coordinator was globally-recognised for its ability to manage a complex supply chain and this was being reflected in the recent performance.

**Q:** Robert Aitchison (RA) - What sort of volume does China comprise for coal exports?

**A:** CC confirmed it was previously almost three million tonnes per month

**LK** – Noted the calibre of CLG participants from the coal sector during her time involved in the group

**CC** – Noted. Credited NCIG and PWCS for their supply chain efficiency and leadership.

**RH** – What is the long-term strategy for ro-ro and vehicles, given lower demand for vehicles around Australia?

**SB** – Noted the importance of catering for new vehicles, including those with new or emerging energy technology. This was consistent with PON's plans to remain an energy port, by embracing trade that is at the cutting edge of technology and well-positioned for a sustainable future.

**RH** – Asked if PON would store ro-ro vehicles on-wharf or somewhere else

**SB** – Said PON was examining the port's capacity in this area.

**GH** – Said PON would consider multi-storey carparks on port land to cater for ro-ro cargo owner needs. PON was looking at all types of vehicles and what consumers and industry will need long into the future. PON views hydrogen as a relevant energy form for vehicles in the long-term.

**CC** – Confirmed PON was looking at green investment in these types of projects.

**Q:** Dallas Fletcher (DF) – Requested an update on the EPIK Newcastle Gas Dock terminal proposal.

**SB** – Said the project was still progressing. Noted competitor proposals at other ports. EPIK’s plan is to buy LNG in the Northern Hemisphere summer and sell into Australian winter demand. Noted the close proximity to industrial users in the Hunter. EPIK now progressing through planning approvals.

**LK** – How often and how do you engage the NSW Planning Department regarding projects?

**SB** – PON continues to work with City of Newcastle for the smaller projects and is building relationships with the Department of Planning and working closely with it on its future plans.

**Q:** John Hayes (JH) – Has planning approval been granted for the EPIK Newcastle GasDock project, given it has Critical State Significant Infrastructure status (CSSI). Has it navigated them?

**SB** – The CSSI status helps provide comfort to project developers. Noting planning work is underway but that the project has not cleared all of the relevant approval processes

### **Graham Hardes – Carrington Community Council**

- Thanked PON and Newcastle MP Tim Crakanthorp’s office for the support to adjusting the criteria for the Newcastle Port Community Contribution Fund
- Noted 75% of funds now allocated to local projects and not-for-profits
- Noted funding allocated to the \$183,000 project to install solar lights on Throsby Creek
- Noted a separate Seabin project that was not funded but still important to the CCC
- Seabin is an Australian idea, with a pilot underway in Sydney
- The project is trying to get 30 tonnes of plastic out of the waterways, removing oils and fuels.
- The project has an Information Day in Carrington – information to be sent out to CLG members
- Noted interest from some CLG members, including PWCS
- Seeking local businesses interested in sponsoring a bin

### **John Thacker – Newcastle West Community Group**

- Welcomed the work on the Carrington Engine House
- Confirmed the creation of this new community group for those in postcode 2302
- Noted that there were not many residents in the postcode, but a number of public facilities
- Initial interest in street tidiness and noise issues, but looking at making a difference to the broader community
- Thanked the CLG for enabling this new group to be represented on CLG

### **Dave Williams (DW) – Stockton representative**

- Interested in rejuvenation of the Stockton Community Group
- Stockton erosion issue remains the priority, noting concerns about engagement with City of Newcastle to get erosion plan progressed
- The group hopes to have sand placed in two places in response to erosion
- The group wants sand sourced from the south arm of the channel dredging work
- Noted the group numbers were increasing, with interest in local vandalism and lighting issues
- Jennifer Anderson (JA) thanked DW for the comments and confirmed PON continued to look at how it could assist with the sand nourishment program.
- JA said PON was working with the NSW Government departments to that goal

**Q:** GH asked about Denison St geotechnical work recently

**A:** CC noted the work and said further updates would be provided in the next meeting regarding PON’s ideas for property on that street.

**Q:** RB asked if PON had any plans to promote tourism around Newcastle.

**TM –** Noted that PON is an enabler. PON does not generate tourism itself, but is part of a working group looking at making the Hunter an attractive destination for cruise ships. Noted that infrastructure does not drive tourism, but that it has a role in supporting a holistic solution. PON continues to be part of that group to support a thriving local tourism sector.

**Q:** RB asked if the Walsh Point area currently fenced off could be opened as a short-term park for caravans and recreational vehicles (motorhomes). RB noted that motorhome organisations have appetite to have an RV park in Newcastle and in particular along the port edges. RB also referred to his ongoing advocacy of a service such as Spirit of Tasmania operating out of the Port of Newcastle. RB argued that there was significant need for a freight, vehicle and tourist operation to Tasmania. He also suggested a Newcastle to New Zealand service.

**A:** JA noted that Walsh Point was an area part of PON's Bulk Precinct. PON is looking at long-term plans for Walsh Point but that the focus was on ensuring basic services, such as utilities, sewerage and stormwater, in the near-term. JA noted that some of the land, while appearing vacant, was subject to ownership or lease from other port users. JA noted that recreational activity, such as an RV park, would be challenging given the terms of PON's lease from the NSW Government.

**Q:** JH requested a sub-group of CLG members meet with PON regarding the future of Walsh Point.

**A:** CC noted stormwater, sewerage and other utilities were not consistent across the area and that PON did not control most of the land. CC said PON needed to understand the potential of the land and this would take time. CC noted that there will be stakeholder engagement process for this work.

**RB –** Noted that there was considerable public infrastructure being planned and put into place that benefits Port Kembla's future plans but not Port of Newcastle. RB said NSW Government funding towards Port Kembla was targeted and extensive. RB noted the NSW Government put barriers up to future development in Newcastle, including the Multipurpose Deepwater Terminal, at a time when significant rail and road infrastructure investment was being made to improve Port Kembla's and Port Botany's capability, competitiveness and viability.

**RC –** Noted there were efficiency and cost issues at Port Botany due to an expensive and congested landside component. RC noted congestion in Sydney and Wollongong comes as a cost to the economy. RC confirmed that the MDT would not need public infrastructure investment to be viable. RC advised the group that PON was currently unable to communicate with a Minister or Ministerial staffer from the NSW Government regarding any port priorities, projects and other activities. This included recent announcements about community grants for port-adjacent projects. RC confirmed that Ministers and ministerial staffers were not currently communicating with PON. He noted Port Kembla had a geographical disadvantage and significant investments needed to be able to handle any significant increase in trade. RC said that once penalties on PON's container movements were removed, PON would move to build the MDT. He said market force would change the supply chain once there was a level playing field.

**JH –** Requested that PON consider building a new rail connection through the Steel River site, adjacent to PON's land, noting that he had previously raised this idea with the CLG.

**RC –** Advised that the priority was on removing the penalties associated with container trade and that, once this was resolved, PON would build the infrastructure it needed to service the MDT.

## Meeting close

Meeting closed at 7.10pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 2021. Date and venue to be confirmed.