



Used Lead Acid Battery Community Liaison Committee Meeting

16-Apr-25

7.00pm

Online - MS Teams

Minutes

Topic	Host
Welcome to Country	Philip Reichert
Apologies Refer attached attendance sheet.	Philip Reichert
Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting Approved by Lorraine Bull (Latrobe Valley Sustainability Group) and John Ellingham (community member).	Philip Reichert
Update on EPA Submission We submitted all our documents in early November to EPA. We received some comments and feedback from them in March. We are currently working on addressing those comments to provide the necessary information back to them. We expect it to take another two to three months for us to finalise and submit the required clarifications and requests.	Lakshman Jayaweera
Progress Report: Regarding the site, everything is going well managing the site. There are no problems.	

Questions on the EPA Approval: Question Bronwyn Woodward (community member)- I understand that it's frustrating trying to get things moving, but it's quite concerning that this project was supposedly "shovel-ready" back in 2020, and now here we are in April 2025, still without EPA approval. That's frustrating and concerning at the same time. I can only hope that the delays will ultimately result in a more community-friendly outcome. But still, it's hard to ignore the fact that after all this time — from being declared shovel-ready in 2020 — we're still potentially two or three months away from getting EPA approval. Comment Dr Lakshman Jayaweera (Pure Chunxing)- We had started the construction, which was supposed to be limited to the areas that we could do. But after that, we decided that it would be very difficult for us to go ahead with that until the EPA approval is given because there could be changes. So we need to be cautious about investing further in the construction of the improvement of the site until we get the full approval from the EPA. Comment Sally Fraser (ALIVE Inc)- You weren't allowed to build anything on the site until you got approval. So it stopped because you started putting pipes in the ground. The council was notified, and they said stop. I spoke to the Council regarding that. They said, you shouldn't be doing any further work until it's approved by EPA. Comment Dr Lakshman Jayaweera (Pure Chunxing)- No, that is not entirely accurate. That is the news for us. We had a limited level of construction we could do which we have done. Comment Philip Reichert (Chair)- I remember in the early days, your neighbour had a flooding or other problem, and they did some pipe work. I don't know if that's relevant, but that's the only thing I remember in my head: the neighbour on the right—I don't know the truck or the other place—had some flood issue with their property elevation. That's the only thing I can remember myself that I look. It could be in the minute, so I don't know. Question for Sally Fraser (ALIVE Inc): Can you elaborate on the reports that the EPA is waiting for? Comment Dr Lakshman Jayaweera (Pure Chunxing)- It's difficult because there are more technical issues, and we have five world-class consultants working on everything for EPA. Question John Ellingham (community member)- is the EPA trying to confuse the matters, so people throw up their hands away and walk away? Comment Dr Lakshman Jayaweera (Pure Chunxing)- I don't think so. I mean it's a real professional approach that both sides are taking. Comment John Ellingham (community member) - I find it confusing that the EPA, an environmental organisation, is approving a chemical and electrical operation. It just seems to me it's out of their league. Comment Stacey Clarke (VIC EPA)- John, you are correct about the broader plant. There's an electrical plant with many components unrelated to the EPA, such as building construction. However, the EPA oversees parts of the operation that discharge to air, land, or water. This includes on-site wastewater management and emissions to the air, which are essential for the plant's operation. These aspects are regulated by the EPA.	Philip Reichert
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Comment John Ellingham (community member) - Run that argument for my house which has a number of discharges too, but it would be silly to suggest that the air discharge is going to be the planning authority in the approval for the construction of my house.

Comment Stacey Clarke (VIC EPA)-We're not a planning authority, we are the Environment Protection Authority and we regulate pollution and waste as it pertains to commercial and industrial activities, not residential construction.

Comment John Ellingham (community member)- My point is, just because they have a discharge, it doesn't make sense that EPA has responsibility for doing a mechanical and electrical approval? If it's not EPA, who is it?

Comment Stacey Clarke (VIC EPA)- We are not authorising any mechanical or electrical components. Another regulatory body, such as the Victorian Building Authority or Worksafe, may have oversight in these areas. Our focus is not on approving the building's construction; rather, we are responsible for approving the pollution control equipment within the building and the process design systems related to pollution control. These are the aspects for which we hold regulatory responsibility. If and when the building is constructed and a licence is obtained, our approvals will pertain specifically to these elements. This overview is provided at a very general and high-level perspective.

Question John Ellingham (community member)- I feel like this is difference to the information provided in prior meetings. When I asked that question about 5 minutes ago and was told that the EPA was the authority to approve all of the approval for this construction. Now I'm being told that there's another authority somewhere that's going to do all the electrical approval and all the mechanical approval and all the civil approval where and when is that going to happen?

Comment Dr Lakshman Jayaweera (Pure Chunxing)- Basically every authority has its role when it comes to the construction, that includes all the various authorities like Worker Cover. There are people involved during the construction period and we do according to the requirements and approval given by the Council for the construction building and related work. But at the same time, we wait for the EPA approval because there could be changes that normally we may need to do. So we are waiting for that to happen before we start again.

Question John Ellingham (community member)-Something's not reading through here. All of the switchgear, all of the electrics, have all been modified from the Chinese version to Australian standards. Who is approving all of that?

Comment Dr Lakshman Jayaweera (Pure Chunxing)- We have an international recognized company to approve that compliance to the Australian Standards, which is quite common.

Comment Rachel Irvine-Marshall (Pure)- Meeting those requirements is part of our planning approval with Council.

Comment Stacey Clarke (VIC EPA)-

They'll also be parts of the system that EPA would have for approval process. We're looking at the full design of it. We're not walking into a building and looking at the electrical switchboard and approving that, so it's as it would be the same. John, when you build a house, you have plumbers who installed the plumbing and are responsible for ticking off the plumbing. You would have electrical inspectors that would sign off the electricity part of your house, and then you have the other people that do different parts of it. So we're one part of an overall thing. If there's a fire suppression system, Fire Rescue Victoria would have approvals in that. Dangerous goods would sit with work safe. There's a myriad of different regulators and approval authorities that work on a big project like this.

Comment John Ellingham (community member)-

In a case of a House, the Council does the approval for the building. The Council gives you an approval and you're required to comply with the electrical standards set in Australia. This is a building that is being designed overseas. It has overseas switched gear that has been modified and overseas electrical components which have been modified to the Australian standards. The question I'm asking is who is doing the approval? Because I understood it was the EPA that was doing all of the approvals. That's what I was told three or four months ago, and now I'm being told something slightly different, but the only thing you're approving is still discharge licences. That's not consistent. And I have asked the same question five months ago.

Comment Bronwyn Woodward (community member)- Perhaps those people that are approving all those other sections are part of the \$4 million worth of consultants that they've spent so far.

Comment John Ellingham (community member)- Consultants can't give the approval. I am asking who is the authority in Australia that is doing all of electrical and the switches approval

Comment Dr Lakshman Jayaweera (Pure Chunxing)- If you go through that work approval, you will find that everything that according to the standard that we are following.

Question Sally Fraser (ALIVE Inc)- Are you saying that once EPA approves then you go to like the other approvals for the switches and they'll electrical and all the other ones to get then approval for their aspect or have they already approved?

Comment Dr Lakshman Jayaweera (Pure Chunxing)- As part of the Work Approval, we have to get the approval from a certain extent that we have to consult with for example, Worker Cover Victoria. So there are a couple of other regulators also dealing with us. The work approval that we have received from the EPA should be in the public domain. An international company called TUV approve the compliance with Australian Standards.

Question John Ellingham (community member)- Submission to EPA and held up because it required things like emergency services. What has emergency services got to do with the EPA Approval and why was the submission held up while all of that work was done to be submitted to with the EPA approval plan? It doesn't make sense. This is just not adding up.

Comment Dr Lakshman Jayaweera (Pure Chunxing)- If you look at the Work Approval, it says that we have to consult the emergency services like Fire Rescue Victoria. We need to be approved, and we have got those approval to be submitted to the EPA.

Comment Stacey Clarke (VIC EPA) - The works approval requires a detailed design report of equipment demonstrating good engineering practice and compliance with Australian Engineering, Occupational Health, and Safety standards. This must be signed off by Work Safe. For fire suppression equipment, Fire Rescue Victoria's approval is needed. Although some authorities may not require separate licensing applications, this process serves as a check and balance through referral authorities.

Question John Ellingham (community member)-what is that got to do with discharge licence?

Comment Stacey Clarke (VIC EPA)- John, I'm sorry I don't have an answer for that question. It's part of the whole process of applying for and building plant and equipment that will discharge to the environment. The equipment that does that is regulated under different legislation that we don't have ownership of.

Comment John Ellingham (community member)- It's little bit suspicious. There's something going on behind the scenes here that we don't know about. That the EPA is running frustration campaign.

Comment Philip Reichert (Chair)- Maybe this is an opportunity for you then to write directly to the EPA share

Philip
Reichert

your concerns with the EPA. Write to them and ask them and get a formal response from EPA on all of your questions and concerns. I would suggest.

Comment Stacey Clarke (VIC EPA)- I am happy for you to send that through. I respond to every email, even if the answers aren't always what people want. If you want to put everything in writing, I'm open to that.

Comment Sally Fraser (ALIVE Inc)-I reiterate what Bronwyn highlighted: in 2020, the reports' obvious lack of information is really concerning, and further details are required to get this approval. So, the EPA is thoroughly looking into it because it is in our backyard. It is for our kid's safety. I remember one of the community meetings, and it was actually where we raised the question of how to implement an emergency management plan; everyone needs one of them. The person replied that there was no need for an EMP because there would never be a fire. So that was concerning, as were the answers we were being given then. And I'm glad that the EPA's being really thorough.

Comment Philip Reichert (Chair)-

I found it on the EPA website, the magnesium plant on the corner that it's been plotting along the EPA actually find lawn power plant breaching their startup operations. So for me, just reading that, not that I want people to get fined or penalised, but the important thing is that a governing body, in this case the EPA, is taking the community and these issues seriously. It's not just about what ULAB is doing, even the magnesium plant failed to meet their startup procedures, and even Yallourn got fined for supplying potash or something. I'm just saying neutrally. That's one thing I know I'm not defending. I'm not saying anything, as I've said to you, John, it's a very complex issue you've raised and the questions you are raising and I know you've joined the meeting in the last period, but a lot of us have been here for nearly six years, maybe read the Minutes, maybe any questions either send them to Pure or Chunxing copy to Rachel and send it to the EPA as well, get a definitive answer from the EPA of your questions and concerns. Pure or Chunxing could respond appropriately for whatever EPA obviously can't answer for, but maybe this is something now should be put in writing to it could become a bit circular otherwise, This could help bring some clear facts to the table so the matter can be dealt with properly. That would be my suggestion.

Comment Rachel Irvine-Marshall (Pure)- Let's John's queries in writing and then that gives us all a chance to digest them and respond with some facts around the approval process to date.

Comment Philip Reichert (Chair)- Your questions are not being dismissed John. Stacey and Lakshman are addressing them, but they are quite complex. They should be written down and addressed one by one for clarity, ensuring the community receives clear answers. If there is a question that has not yet been asked, after reviewing the minutes and considering all information, please write it down. You are encouraged to bring it to the meeting or send it formally in writing to the Pure Group and Chunxing to receive a clear answer.

Comment Dr. Lakshman Jayaweera (Pure Chunxing)- As Stacey suggested, we are diligently adhering to all the specified requirements outlined in the work approval conditions. This includes compiling approximately 10-15 reports. Our efforts aim to comprehensively meet these requirements and ensure the satisfaction of the EPA. We have been thoroughly working on this, and it would be beneficial for you to review the work approval conditions, which are available in the public domain.

Comment Philip Reichert (Chair)-We should focus on the meeting's agenda and avoid personal comments. If you have concerns about the EPA, please put them in writing and send them directly to the EPA. Stacey represents the EPA but isn't the EPA herself, so your questions may need other EPA officials' input. This isn't the right forum for those concerns.

Comment by Lorraine Bull (Latrobe Valley Sustainability Group)- I agree with John's concerns but didn't pursue them as vigorously. John, you can state in your letter that multiple committee members are disappointed with the lengthy process and lack of clarity on requirements.

Comment Philip Reichert (Chair)- Lorraine, you may collaborate with John, both of you can work together and submit it to the EPA since most questions seem directed at them, and the remaining issues will likely be handled by the Pure Group. They will review the entire matter. Everyone seeks the correct solutions for all parties involved. I am confident in this, but following the necessary process is essential. Comment Sally Fraser (ALIVE Inc) - I would like to clarify a point. While Lorraine mentioned that more than one person has expressed concerns, I want to ensure it is understood that not everyone shares the same view. Personally, I do not believe this location is suitable for the project. However, I prefer not to be perceived as part of the group questioning the EPA on this matter. I wanted to make this distinction clear. Comment by Philip Reichert (Chair) - John and Sally raised an important point. If anyone shares these feelings, you must include your name on this letter. Lorraine, if you feel strongly about this, your name should be on it, but you cannot include others who may not share the same sentiment. Names must be provided to address the real concerns fairly. Everyone should have the opportunity to respond. If the answers are unsatisfactory, further actions will follow. Thank you, Sally, for bringing this up.	
Other questions from the community members for discussion Question from Sally Fraser (ALIVE Inc) - I understand that everyone is busy. My concern is that we have only received the Minutes after Bronwyn has followed up on them. I've seen CC minutes provided two weeks before this meeting was held. Ideally, the Minutes should be distributed three weeks after a meeting so that they are fresh in our minds, allowing us to read them and raise any questions we may have. Receiving the Minutes a week before the next meeting seems too late for members to review them adequately. Comment Rachel Irvine-Marshall (Pure)- Thank you for the feedback and Bronwyn's feedback as well. It's been challenging for me to complete the meeting minutes due to other activities. Thus, Florence has joined us to help with this task. Understanding the Community's concern about timely meeting minutes, Florence will prepare the first draft, which I will proofread a week later. This will allow us to release the minutes by the second week after the meeting. We will seek feedback from the Community in the next meeting regarding this new process. We aimed to be proactive and present a solution to the Community today. Question Bronwyn Woodward (community member)- I submitted that question for inclusion on the agenda outside the required seven-day notice period for submitting questions regarding the Minutes. Therefore, I assume it should have been included on the agenda as it was raised by the Community. Could you clarify if it will be addressed during the appropriate section? Comment Rachel Irvine-Marshall (Pure)- Philip and I caught up before to discuss how to address this item during the meeting. It was agreed to cover it under other business. Question John Ellingham (community member)- Have you considered using AI to create minutes in under 30 minutes? Comment Rachel Irvine-Marshall (Pure)- Yes, we use AI, John. That's why you see the recording message. The AI provides a full transcript of the meeting, but it's not perfect and contains errors. It also gives us a topic summary, but reviewing and ensuring each question and response is accurately summarized takes time. Florence has kindly offered to help me with this task.	Philip Reichert

Question John Ellingham (community member) - At the last meeting, there was a discussion about whether Pure would support imposing KPI targets and be willing to compensate the community if those targets were breached. I do not agree with this proposal. If you have EPA is responsible for overseeing license requirements and those KPIs, why would you then involve the community? How would you define the community? It appears that Morwell and Churchill may not be considered part of it, whereas Hazelwood North is. The suggestion has been made that compensation should be provided if the company emits something potentially harmful, instead of recommending medical testing for affected individuals. This raises concerns about prioritising financial aspects over health and safety. I am participating on this committee to create job opportunities in a safe and sustainable manner for the Latrobe Valley. I believe the EPA will ensure safe operations, and do not think additional KPIs for local communities are necessary. Such measures could complicate development efforts within the Latrobe Valley. It is important to carefully consider proposals before presenting them, and I trust that PURE will not engage in this suggestion. Comment Bronwyn Woodward (community member)- In 2020, Chunxing proposed conducting blood tests for the community within a certain radius of their factory site. My primary concern is the safety of myself, my children, and my animals within a 2KM radius of the plant and the entire industrial zone area. I have no interest in monetizing this issue; my focus is on ensuring the well-being of my family and future generations. Comment by John Ellingham (community member) - The point I am making is that I do not have an issue with your position Bronwyn. My concern is with the proposition to impose a significant financial penalty to be paid to the community. That aspect is what concerns me. I fully support your actions and intentions. My objection is specifically towards the notion of profiting from this situation. That is my main concern. Comment by Bronwyn Woodward (community member): From my perspective, if something occurs in a northeasterly wind it will affect the school. It is similar to the mind fire, where some areas received benefits while Hazelwood North did not, despite experiencing a similar situation. The wind will carry whatever it takes with it. Hopefully, it won't cause harm, but regarding the community, it's not about one individual. The community as a whole would benefit from it in one way or another. If an incident occurs with a southerly wind, it will affect Hazelwood North within a 2KM radius of the site. The 2KM radius was mentioned in the initial community meetings at Hazelwood North when Chunxing offered to conduct blood tests for the community and the site workers. Comment Sally Fraser (ALIVE Inc) - My suggestion (at the last meeting) was a high-level idea regarding companies like the magnesium plant that was fined by the EPA. Although it is good that they were fined for their wrongdoing, for a multi-million dollar company, the fines can sometimes be insignificant. I proposed the concept of implementing a KPI system where, if certain thresholds were exceeded, funds would be redirected back into the community. This way, no individual benefits personally, but the company would feel the impact and understand that compliance is being monitored closely. I believe in strict safety measures, especially since this issue affects our local area. My intention was to suggest an approach that could open up further consultation with the community on how these funds should be allocated, ensuring clarity that it was never meant for personal gain. Comment Stacey Clarke (VIC EPA)- I will elaborate further on that point. From memory, although I do not have the meeting minutes with me, Karl discussed the potential penalties that could be enforced should breaches occur when Sally asked about them. I then mentioned the processes involved if a license holder breaches regulations, including the court system	Philip Reichert
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we might go through or possible sanction levels based on the actual infraction. Sally, you talked about how the community could potentially benefit if such a case goes through a court system. For example, if there is a license in place and something goes wrong, the EPA might prosecute the matter through the courts. One possible outcome of this court process could be an environmental justice or restorative justice decision, where the court grants a sum of money to a community group or groups for a restorative project. This idea aligns with what you referred to, Sally, though it involves the court systems rather than a company taking responsibility through a KPI. We are essentially discussing a similar outcome where the community benefits if something were to go wrong. Comment Sally Fraser (ALIVE Inc) - Yes, it's putting their money where their mouth is. It's all safe and fine. However, if something goes wrong, to be prepared to pay out a large fine so it doesn't happen again. That's my point. Comment Lorraine Bull (Latrobe Valley Sustainability Group) - Stacey has already highlighted my point. Initially, there would be fines and prosecution from the EPA. The community itself would not impose any fine.	
Comment Dr Lakshman Jayaweera (Pure Chunxing)- Regarding the KPI, as detailed by Karl in the meeting minutes, our objective is to maintain optimal plant performance, better than EPA limits. We do not anticipate incurring any penalties. Our aim is to avoid any breaches. We remain committed to supporting the community, as part of our ongoing efforts, rather than focusing on penalties, which we do not foresee. Question Lorraine Bull (Latrobe Valley Sustainability Group)-confirm with Bronwyn that blood tests were offered. I am unsure if this is still the case. Perhaps Lakshman could provide clarification on this matter. Comment Dr Lakshman Jayaweera (Pure Chunxing)- We will have a standard procedure (for occupational Stacey reminded everyone to maintain respect for each other's opinions and points of view during the meeting, emphasizing the importance of respectful communication. Comment Philip Reichert (Chair)- I've made a suggestion to write to Pure or EPA. This isn't a forum for personal agendas. Let's remember it can get emotional, but we're here to share and express our opinions freely. Thank you. Philip Reichert (Chair) requested if we can amend the current practice to retain meeting recordings of the last two meetings for reference and accuracy as this meeting has referenced the last couple of meeting minutes.	Philip Reichert
Next Meeting: New schedule for 2025 has been sent to the CLC members. Agenda Items, please send to Rachel prior to the meeting Wednesday 18 June 2025 - online meeting.	Philip Reichert