

Australian Vinyls Soil & Groundwater Meeting

Minutes and Record of Questions and Answers

Date: 23 April 2001

Location: Altona Conference Room

Time: 17:00

1. Present

Paul Cassar (Resident)
Gerry Hein (Resident)
James Braithwaite (EPA)
Beatrice Schupfer (CWW)
Brian Gregurke (Dow)
Rob Plenderleith (AV)
Greg Lazzaro (AV)

Helen Miller (AV)
Jacinta Spottiswood (AV)
Noel Ryan (AV)
Dave Adams (PPK)
Dave Wenig (PPK)
Geoff Ellis (PPK)

2. Apologies for absence

Judy Hindle (Resident)
Mal Hindle (Resident)
Ken Lambert (Resident)

Warren Waples (AV)
David Hornby (AV)
Dick Stomps (AV)

3. Confirmation of Agenda

Rob Plenderleith sought the opportunity to open the meeting with a few comments.

4. Rob Plenderleith comments

Rob announced to the group that he was leaving Australian Vinyls to join Mobil as SHE Risk Adviser for their downstream business operations (ie. all things downstream of their refineries). Rob thanked the Group for its support and assistance to AV and to Rob personally over the years.

5. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes were accepted without amendment.

6. Groundwater treatment - update

David Adams presented the progress on treatment. The Groundwater Treatment Facility (GWTF) is still operating as an "attended" operation until noise issues are resolved. A couple of "attended" overnight runs have been completed in order to assess noise. Monitoring during these runs found that the GWTF complied with the EPA's Noise SEPP.

The noise arising from the GWTF is an OHS issue only and should be controlled by the noise attenuation installed today and later this week.

Aside from the noise issue, the GWTF has been running constantly except for two shutdown periods. The first was associated with proving the emergency shutdown systems and the linkages of these through to plant systems. The GWTF passed all shutdown tests.

The second shutdown period followed the heavy rainfall on 24 March. It appears some water may have entered the flame detector that constantly checks for a flame in the burner. When the GWTF stopped receiving an OK signal from the detector it shut itself down. As soon as the necessary part was replaced, the unit was restarted with no problems. The position of a cover over the flame detector has been altered to better prevent water getting into the detector.

Currently when operating, GWTF has been extracting vapour from the soil but not sparging the groundwater. Sparging operations will commence when the facility commences unattended operation.

Dave presented the following overheads (attached) of the GWTF operations:

- EDC extracted, as CO₂ and as EDC vapour;
- Environmental impacts, CO₂ generated, water consumed and disposed arising from treatment operations;
- Environmental impacts relative to EDC extracted..

Q. *Why use only EDC?*

A. EDC is the major contaminant by an order of magnitude. We elected to convert all measures to EDC equivalents to make comparisons over time easier.

Q. *How do you know the CO₂ is from in situ destruction of contaminants?*

A. Background CO₂ levels are very close to zero. Also, the CO₂ blown into the ground via the sparge system (which has only operated for very limited periods anyway) is an order of magnitude lower than the CO₂ being drawn from the ground via the SVE system. Accordingly, we are confident that the CO₂ being drawn from the ground is due to natural degradation of contaminants by microbes under the site.

Q. *Why is water so low, isn't the scrubber running all the time?*

A. The water is low because the effluent is discharged on a batch basis. We have not discharged any batches yet, so the figures are still very low. Over time we expect the trend to be more apparent.

Q. *Why use separate CO₂ plots, why not a single Greenhouse gas equivalents plot?*

A. Agreed. We will change to a single plot showing Greenhouse gas equivalents.

Q. *Will you need to switch off for periods in future to assess recovery of contaminants as a means of checking treatment effectiveness?*

A. Yes, over time we may need to drop back from continuous operations to pulsed operations, eg. operate one week in four, to maintain effective treatment.

Q. *The labels on the graphs are too small.*

A. We will make these more legible.

6. Commissioning & handover for operation

Jacinta Spottiswood reported that commissioning was "pretty much complete", the only outstanding items being noise attenuation and awareness information. Jacinta then presented an outline of the draft awareness information for plant personnel (copy attached).

Q. *There is nothing in the package about safety showers.*

A. Noted, location of safety shower and eyewashes will be included in the package.

Q. *If the auto shutdown system fails, how will plant personnel shut down the facility?*

A. The emergency shutdown buttons will disconnect all power to the facility.

Q. *How are the gas detectors arranged?*

A. There are three gas detectors at the GWTF. An alarm condition on any of these will initiate an emergency shutdown of the GWTF. Also, an alarm condition on any of the four Horton Sphere gas detectors or the three LPG Facility gas detectors will also initiate an emergency shutdown of the GWTF.

7. Monitoring during- & post-commissioning

David Adams outlined the monitoring program for the groundwater treatment system during- and post-commissioning. The focus of this monitoring has been on system performance, compliance with EPA RD&D conditions and compliance with CWW trade waste requirements.

Noel Ryan advised that initial stack test results indicated an exceedence against the RD&D permit. It seems that some contaminants are being removed from the groundwater at higher rates than others whereas the modelling for the RD&D approval was performed on the assumption that all contaminants would be removed at similar rates.

Noel said this highlighted the value of the EPA's RD&D system where a company and the EPA could set limits based on available knowledge and revise these in the light of additional data. James Braithwaite supported this comment.

Noel commented that when the final stack test results were available, AV would be meeting with EPA to discuss the implications of the results.

Dave Adams outlined the results of groundwater monitoring in December 2000 as being consistent with results from previous years. (Dave showed 1997 annual results as comparison.)

Q. *What concentration is present at BH-17K?*

A. The concentration of EDC at BH-17K is in the range 200 – 300 ppm.

Dave also mentioned that preliminary EDC results from monitoring in March 2001 (all wells) indicates contaminant levels consistent with previous monitoring rounds.

8. Groundwater Management Plan

It was agreed that Noel Ryan prepare a draft of the Groundwater Management Plan amendments and circulate.

9. General discussion & questions

There were no further issues raised.

10. Next meeting

It was agreed to hold the next meeting in three months – 23 July 2001.

Meeting closed at 7.30 pm.