

Environment Protection Authority

EPA Board

Regional Engagement Tour 2015 Summary Report

Whyalla, Port Augusta and Port Pirie

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summary report**

Whyalla, Port Augusta and Port Pirie

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Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Regional summit	3
3	Summary of the key themes	6
4	Delegates	7

1 Introduction

This report summarises the proceedings of the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Board's Regional Engagement Tour of Whyalla, Port Augusta and Port Pirie on 30 June and 1 July 2015.

In accordance with section 19 of the *Environment Protection Act 1993* (the Act), the Board holds various consultation and engagement sessions to assist the EPA, the Board and the Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation to assess the views of interested bodies within the state on matters related to the operation of the Act and protection of the environment.

This year, as part of its stakeholder and community engagement program, the Board hosted more than one event to fulfil this requirement.

The Board and Executive team travelled to Whyalla where they were joined by an EPA licence coordinator to meet with Arrium Mining and OneSteel Whyalla Steelworks representatives.

The Arrium team included Matt Reed (Chief Executive, Arrium Mining), Theuns Victor (General Manager Whyalla Steelworks), Chris Smyth (National Manager Environment & Sustainability) and Angie Stokes (Manager, Stakeholder Engagement).

The Board congratulated Mr Reed on his very recent appointment as Chief Executive Arrium Mining and noted the 50th anniversary of the steelworks in Whyalla.



EPA Board and Executive team with Arrium Mining and OneSteel Whyalla representatives at Hummock Hill, adjacent to the Arrium facility. Pictured (left to right): Matt Reed, David Vaughan, Mia Handshin, Tony Circelli, Linda Bowes, Ros DeGaris, Ros Agate, Helen Macdonald, Andrew Wood, Keith Baldry, Rob Fowler, Hannah Pitcher, Theuns Victor and Chris Smyth.

The EPA visitors were given an extensive overview of the progress the company has made over many years to improve its business and environmental performance, and the challenges for the future. In particular, it was noted that Arrium is currently working on an upgrade to its Reheat Furnace which is expected to reduce CO₂e by approximately 33,280 tonnes per annum, equivalent to removing 7,000 passenger vehicles off the road.

Following the Arrium tour, the Board held a regional summit in Whyalla, attended by 20 regional delegates representing a cross-section of business, industry, government and non-government sectors. Delegates considered how better regulation can drive innovation in regional SA and how the EPA can support business, promote innovation and remove unnecessary burdens on business while protecting the environment. Positive feedback was provided in relation to the EPA's regional presence program with specific suggestions for improvement offered.

The Board also held its July meeting in Whyalla, where corporate planning initiatives for 2015–16 were discussed.

The following day, the EPA Board and Executive team met with Nyrstar representatives in Port Pirie: Bertus De Villiers (Vice President, Metals Refining), Jim Tyler (Environment Manager Port Pirie Lead Smelter), Johan Skoglund (Group Manager Environment) and Gail Bartel (Manager Corporate Communications).

Mr De Villiers presented a step-by-step guide on the progress of the Transformation Project. A tour of the site was then taken and various highlights pointed out including the location for the new top submerged lance (TSL) furnace. The redevelopment of the Port Pirie smelter to an advanced multi-metals processing and recovery facility is well underway. The project changes the facility from a primary lead smelter to a poly-metallic processing and recovery facility.

He also highlighted the culture change program 'Broken Windows' implemented in 2014 where staff were encouraged to find improvement opportunities in their area and take responsibility to resolve them. Since the program was initiated, more than 750 improvement initiatives have been implemented. The EPA noted that there has been a correlation between culture change on site and a trend in emissions reductions from the existing plant.

The EPA agreed to hold a joint meeting with the Nyrstar Board later in 2015 to discuss the draft licence and the progress of the Transformation Project.

The Board and Executive team met informally with the Mayor of Port Pirie John Rohde, Councillor Alan Zubrinich and Chief Executive Andrew Johnson to discuss local issues and challenges for Port Pirie Council. Key topics of discussion were the working relationship between the council and Nyrstar, and the Port Pirie boat ramp.

The Board and Executive team also took the opportunity to view Nyrstar's photographic exhibition at the local art gallery, displaying a pictorial view of the company's 132-year history.



At the Nyrstar facility. Back to front: Johan Skoglund, Bertus de Villiers, Andrew Wood, Keith Baldry, Tony Circelli, Ros Agate, Rob Fowler, Ros DeGaris, Helen Macdonald, Hannah Pitcher, Mia Handshin, Linda Bowes, Gerard Hocking and Jim Tyler.

2 Regional summit

The Regional Summit was held at The Palms Function Centre, Whyalla Norrie during the afternoon on 30 June.

A total of 20 delegates representing a cross-section of business, industry, government and non-government sectors from around the area attended the session. The attendees split into four groups to discuss questions posed by the EPA. At the conclusion of the discussion one representative from each table reported back to the broader group.

Below is a summary of the group discussion:

1 **What are the major issues currently impacting on the well-being and prosperity of your region/area? In other words, what is happening in your backyard that we should be aware of? And what do you see as the role of the EPA in relation to these issues?**

- The EPA should attend various regional fora to make a difference.
- Continued support from regionally focused staff is important.
- Take a partnership approach with industry.
- EPA input into broader regional approach – council of the future.
- Help support clean, green and safe environment for exports.
- Support renewals, eg Port Augusta.
- Positive EPA response to development applications.
- Pre-development application discussions with EPA would be helpful.
- The EPA should recognise the bigger picture when dealing with development applications.
- The EPA should give consideration to the utilities required in development applications.
- The unique ability of Eyre Peninsula and the Spencer Gulf to support renewable energy projects.

Leigh Staines (Santos) reported back to the group noting that utilities are a pinch point in the region. Water management is also a big issue and a focus needs to be made on the move towards reuse. He highlighted the importance of a regional EPA presence.

2 **What should we, as a community and as a regulator, be doing to ensure we hand our environment in a good state to future generations in particular when it comes to dealing with current and historic environmental issues/pressures?**

- Community wants to be heard and listened to.
- The need to consider 'post Arrium' future for a city that lacks a long-term vision.
- Need diversification into new business and industries (with EPA support) noting that the four to five renewable energy projects are a good start and the EPA should support these projects.
- There was a strong appreciation for the EPA's regional presence program and particularly Peter Scott as regional engagement officer.
- The EPA needs to recognise regional circumstances and focus on collaboration, listening and risk-based approaches.

- It is not possible to envisage 'sustainable' use of resources when it comes to the mining industry.
- The EPA's regulatory role is not feasible in this region regarding illegal dumping by the community – an educational and collaborative approach is required.

Louise Swann (Santos) reported that there was strong agreement at the table on the need for a long-term approach for the region and the need for a balance between social, economic and environmental values for the region. It is important for the regulator to recognise the different needs of the community in an industry based area.



3 What do you see as the EPA's role in your region? In addition to our role as regulator, how can we perform as an engager, educator and enabler in your area?

- Fact sheets can be useful – as long as they do not force us into overly conservative or prescriptive mould ie 'one size fits all'. It was noted that fact sheets are more useful to less resourced organisations (eg smaller councils, not-for-profit organisations).
- The government should provide a central database for information – it was noted that this is getting better.
- Community should be provided more contact with the EPA enabling them access to technical skills ie workshop issues with the community as they arise.
- Role of the EPA and Natural Resource Management (NRM) authorities needs to be clarified – many project managers end up speaking to all of them separately, this could be better coordinated.
- Access to EPA staff during proposal development is very useful including a process for EPA staff to peer review.
- Regional plans with EPA participation – coordinate Government departments on a spectrum from knowledge through to advice. Concept–design–construct–review.
- Industry issues are specific and can be addressed directly. Harder to engage the EPA on community/options.
- Clarify the role and involvement of the EPA in the Port Lowly port proposal as it is not clear.
- Businesses seek more frequent access to EPA staff for advice.
- EPA advisor/facilitator – more frequent meetings, research and development, collaboration, NRM commitment, monitoring. There is some confusion about EPA involvement.
- EPA has been a coordinator and facilitator between many parties through the regional presence program.
- Local solutions for local issues (reason for regional presence) means greater buy in for all involved.
- Regulatory vs partnerships – presence in regions, to assist in planning involvement and provide project assistance.

- The EPA needs to be a partner in regional planning, therefore a proactive not reactive role.
- The importance of linking up regional development authorities, NRM authorities and local government to ensure evidence-based use of money (rather than fighting for it).

Tony Irvine (Local Government Association) reported that the EPA should provide an advisory service and not be seen to be making decisions from afar. The EPA should be a partner, not just a watchdog.

4 What do you think the EPA is doing well and what can we do better? What are the key actions that you as a regional community can take to improve the current state of play and what do you expect from the EPA?

- Focus should be on having a physical regional presence, support to strengthen this and use a partnership approach to help make it work from a cost perspective.
- Need to ensure pragmatic response to industry/environmental issues.
- Question around the EPA's role in waste education, clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the EPA and local government in this space. Develop a framework for delivering this education.
- The EPA previously had a very heavy handed approach to local landfill, however experiences more recently have been quite the opposite and very positive.
- The EPA coordination has been very effective between SA Water and industry, and this input has been welcomed.
- Illegal dumping is an issue in the region.
- Trade waste issues, particularly with the seafood industry in Port Lincoln, has resulted in more processing offshore, losing economic value.
- The EPA has demonstrated its value to engagement on problematic waste issues in Port Lincoln.
- Modus operandi has changed from a policemen to a facilitator, which has been appreciated by industry and the community.
- Having capacity to help engage locally works and is appreciated, however a permanent local presence would be even better.
- Question around some of the unintended consequences of older laws for example, blood in water within three km under *Environmental Protection (Water Quality) Policy 2003* (Port Lincoln) and the need for a non-militant EPA otherwise a real problem exists.
- Remediation of Alinta Power Station at Port Augusta and particularly the environmental issues regarding the supply of water to 'Burt' lake.

Anita Crisp (Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group) encouraged the EPA to build on its regional presence program noting that the regional engagement officer is a good start. A local presence embedded within the community, in partnership with another agency would create a useful presence in the community. She encouraged the EPA to be willing to have the conversation about opportunities for establishing this.

3 Summary of the key themes

EPA Chief Executive Tony Circelli provided closing summary remarks around the key themes which were heard during the Summit:

- The EPA should investigate the various delivery models for an extended regional presence.
- Note the different cultures on the Eyre Peninsula and Spencer Gulf – the regional cities have unique community and social perspectives, and each has a different rhythm.
- Pragmatic connection with the EPA with regard to the local problems and opportunities.
- The importance of a whole-of-government coordinated and coherent approach.
- Clarify the EPA's role in regional planning and engage the EPA early.
- The difference between large corporate entities, and SMEs and the EPA approach.
- Focus on local problems, do it in partnership and realise the future we all agree on and all want.

Mr Circelli thanked the attendees for supporting the EPA in providing leadership, improving regional capability and the balance between being a facilitator and a regulator. It was highlighted that improvements could be made through extending the regional presence program and working in more collaborative partnerships, particularly with SMEs (recognising that most of the larger licensees already have good working relationships with the EPA).

4 Delegates

The EPA would like to thank the following attendees of the Regional Summit for their valuable contribution:

Dr Melanie Smans	Senior Project Officer, Primary Industries and Regions SA
Mr Andre Stuyt	Group Manager City Development and Delivery, City of Whyalla
Mr Andreas Isdepsky	Operations Manager, Muradel
Mr Ben Smith	Monitoring, Evaluation & Reporting Officer, Natural Resources EP
Mr Chris Smyth	National Manager Environment & Sustainability, Arrium
Mr Dion Dorward	Chief Executive, Regional Development Australia - Whyalla & Eyre Peninsula
Mr Graham Butt	Alternative Port Working Party
Mr John Banks	Chief Executive, Port Augusta City Council
Mr Paul Watson	Executive Officer, SA Sardine Industry Association
Mr Peter Peppin	Chief Executive, City of Whyalla
Mr Ray Davy	Manager Business Services and Sustainability, City of Whyalla
Mr Sid Wilson	Alternative Port Working Party
Mr Tony Irvine	Executive Officer, Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association
Ms Anita Crisp	Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group
Ms Leigh Staines	Plant Manager Port Bonython, SANTOS
Ms Louise Swann	Team Leader Regulatory Engagement and Environment, SANTOS