

## RESIDENTS NEWS LETTER -17

19-6-2013

Dear community member, the YRA is now an OPA Working Group (ORMEAU PROGRESS ASSOCIATION). The OPA has been incorporated since 1989 and holds a public meeting on the first Monday of every month at 6:30pm. All members of the local community are welcome to attend at 11 McCreadie Rd, Ormeau, to discuss local issues that have a direct effect on the community. As a combined group we hope to increase our membership and make a positive difference to the lifestyles of all the people in the surrounding communities.

### **Biomass plant developments:**

As you are all aware a petition was signed by over 6000 local residents objecting to the construction of a biomass plant at 126 Sandy Creek Rd, Yatala.

The 15 Gold Coast Councillors voted unanimously against the application; however that victory was short lived with the Council's own internal town planning department approving the development.

Despite overwhelming evidence being put forward by the community, the development was also approved by the DEHP (Department of Environment & Heritage Protection) which is part of the State government.

Phoenix Power Recyclers announced that they would appeal the Council's decision in court.

This case is expected to be heard in November 2013.

Division 1 councillor Donna Gates has made the following statement.

*"It should also be notified that of the six experts involved in Council's defense of the Phoenix Decision, all but two (air and amenity experts) believe it impossible to support Council's decision. The matter will remain for Council to decide once the legal process is reported back to Committee".*

The YRA has provided Cr Gates with their research material which we believe will be useful to their legal team.

We have also pointed out a number of different phrases within the planning scheme document (that are designed to protect Yatala and Ormeau from inappropriate developments) have been ignored by the council town planners; One clause for example states the following:

*"Bulky development that is unsightly from elevated areas of Beenleigh or Mt Warren Park is not favored".*

The council town planning report makes a poor attempt to address this phrase with the following counter argument:

*"The proposed chimney/stack has a diameter of 2.63 metres (and 30M high). It is considered that this structure will present minimal bulk and will not result in a visual outcome inconsistent with the role of the YEA-LAP as an industrial use area"*

I'm certain that the majority of YRA members would agree that a 30M high chimney emitting smoke 24 hours a day seven days a week would be both Bulky and Unsightly, and NOT consistent with the above planning scheme clause.

On Thursday the 13<sup>th</sup> of June 2013 Mr Mark Boothman MP arranged a meeting between Mr Neville Brownlow Managing Director of Phoenix and Mr Brad Atkins, Chair of the YRA, two other YRA members and the President of the OPA (Ormeau Progress Association) Mr Shane Rushbrook. As the Phoenix development application is currently under appeal, we are not at liberty to reveal all that was discussed, however we are pleased to advise that positive steps are being undertaken by Mr Brownlow to minimise odours escaping from the Phoenix premises (we will rely on our residents' feedback over the next few months to see if those steps are sufficient in containing our odour woes.)

We stress that Phoenix is not the only company in the area capable of creating offensive odours and the best way that we can all help eradicate the problem is to report each incident as accurately as possible. Members who submitted objections to the Phoenix application may remember that the original application included a MSW (Municipal Solid Waste) building. During the application process, the M.S.W proposal was withdrawn from the application, with a qualification that it may be applied for at a later date. At the time we were concerned about this eventually coming true because the building would have been a massive 50 metres in width, 140 metres in length and 15 metres in height. To put this into perspective for those of us living on acreage, this building's mass would have occupied almost 2 acre lots end - to- end and its height would have been greater than many of the trees which currently occupy the space. One can only imagine the huge amount of Council waste that a facility of that size would process and the massive amount of Council truck movements that would be required to feed it. **The good news folks**, is that Mr Brownlow confirmed at the meeting that Phoenix will not be applying for this MSW facility approval now or in the future. We thank Mr Boothman for facilitating the meeting and Mr Brownlow for taking the time to discuss our concerns. Given the high level of concern and anger shown in the community, we understand that Phoenix may be considering alternative locations for the biomass operation, but this is yet to be confirmed.

#### **Chemicals being trucked into Yatala:**

It has come to our attention that the Gold Coast City Council is spending \$3.5 million a year to remove Leachate (waste seepage liquid) from the Staplyton landfill and transporting it into Yatala, about 70% goes to 126 Sandy Creek Rd and is mixed into the mulch for composting, the facility also processes septic waste, septic sludge from the Logan sewerage plant about once a year, Waste fruit & vegetables and Grease trap waste.

#### **Mulch fire at 126 Sandy Creek Rd:**

A large fire took place on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December 2012 at Sandy Creek Rd, Yatala. After nearly 6 months from the date of the incident the Beenleigh C.I.B has made the statement "*investigations are ongoing*". The environment department will not take any action until the police investigation is concluded. Given the length of time that has passed, we can only assume that the authorities are not taking a potential health risk seriously.

#### **Community Watch Monitoring System:**

In September 2012 the Y.R.A held a Community meeting with two resolutions being passed unanimously. **The first resolution** was to set up a formal air monitoring system register to keep the Gold Coast City Council and Queensland Government on notice by recording all complaints made in regards to noise, dust or odour.

**The second resolution** was to lobby the GCCC and QLD Government for a change in legislation, in order to ensure that dirty, unsightly or loud industries are never permitted near our schools, community facilities or residential areas.

As part of the first resolution the air monitoring system was launched in October 2012 and to date a total of 285 complaints have been recorded. Please refer to the website address below for further information.

[http://www.yatala.info/Yatala/Community\\_Watch.html](http://www.yatala.info/Yatala/Community_Watch.html)

All of these complaints have been forwarded to the DEHP, Cr Donna Gates and Mark Boothman MP. The complaints were primarily from zone H in Yatala, with prevailing easterly winds, some were recorded as far away as Rivermount College.

After 7 months of investigation the DEHP has issued one fine for nuisance odour and one fine for breach of development approval condition (odour beyond the boundary).

The community watch system has put the performance of the DEHP firmly under the spotlight, and is also making surrounding businesses aware that they are being continually monitored.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of May 2013 Phoenix Power Recyclers at 126 Sandy Creek Rd announced welcome news that:

*“from now on we will be injecting a Bio Active product into the mixing process and pits which speeds up composting. In addition we will install sprays on the eastern and western sides of the pits and maturation pad to reduce the impact from turning and mixing compost at the pits. We are also in the process of seeking approval from the Gold Coast City Council to enclose our pits and introduce a Bio Filter”.*

The recent actions taken by the DEHP confirm that the online reporting system has been successful, **and I urge all Yatala and Ormeau residents to continue reporting any incidents of dust and offensive odour on the community watch forum.**

Please ensure that the information supplied is accurate, and recorded on each and every occasion. We believe this system will keep existing businesses on notice and deter unwelcome industries from locating their operations next to our homes and schools. The system is designed to raise public awareness, and give the community an indication of how many other fellow residents are being affected. It also provides all parties with live data, which can be acted upon quickly. The DEHP has recently sent out complaint forms to a number of local residents asking them to fill out their official paperwork. If people want to issue their own complaint directly to the DEHP we would encourage that.....all we ask is they also log it on the community watch website. This stops the DEHP's system from dividing the community and gives the process transparency without making your private information public. This will be an ongoing process, and noise monitoring will be introduced in due course. The Westerly wind direction over recent weeks has given the Yatala residents a welcome break, and we hope that the issues are resolved before the Easterly winds return.

#### **With regard to the second resolution: Planning:**

The YRA has been actively lobbying the Gold Coast City Council to amend the planning scheme for the Yatala industrial area.

It is our belief that the current guidelines are ineffective and loosely worded which could allow undesirable developments to be built too close to residential communities.

The YRA makes the point that industries which create offensive odour or affect our visual amenity need to be located in an unpopulated areas on the Eastern side of the M1 freeway, this has been a long standing informal agreement with the Council, which was thought to be formalised in the planning scheme back in 2003. Division 1 councillor Donna Gates has made the following statement.

*“Council has approved a Planning Scheme Review Sub-Committee of 5 representatives, including Cr Donna Gates. The Committee will review all aspects of the Planning Scheme and the issues register of concern which has been developed in consultation with divisional councillors. The location of chimneys to the west of the M1 forms part of that register.*

*A separate Technical Sub-Committee has also been formed drawing on experts from the private sector who can provide technical advice regarding the development of the new planning scheme. Both committees are to be chaired by Cr Greg Betts and will report to the City Planning Committee.*

*Advice to date indicates little support from officers for a change to existing industry and future industry domains, but this will be subject to debate by councillors”.*

We would like for all residents to be aware that each and every one of you have a right to comment on the current Planning Scheme and have your concerns addressed by the Planning Scheme review committee. The YRA are currently investigating the best possible way of getting information critical to the future well being of our area to all our members to help them make their submissions. To make it easier for everyone to take part, it has been suggested we create a sample letter for members to add their names to and forward it to Councillor Donna Gates and the review committee. We are currently considering this option and welcome any other suggestions from our members.

## Regional Sports Park for Yatala

Many, if not all of Yatala's residents are familiar with the past/historical noise issues of the Stanmore Park motorcross site and Council's decision to close it down and move it to Stapylton, we provide the following events in point form to illustrate the very disappointing developments that followed this decision:



- Community meeting 20<sup>th</sup> January 2011 Margaret Keech MP State Member for Albert advised that the land occupied by the Stanmore Motorcross was owned by the State and invited suggestions from residents for suggestions on future uses for the land, this was advised to the wider community in YRA's Newsletter issue 10.
- The Gold Coast Sun issue dated 30<sup>th</sup> March 2011 contained an article advising that Stanmore Park was set for a 2.7 million upgrade, in this article Councillor Gates confirmed that the 15 Hectare (37 acre) site in Stanmore Road would be developed into a regional sporting centre.
- On the 24<sup>th</sup> of March 2011 in a letter to residents Councillor Gates confirmed that Council was working on the establishment of a regional sports park at Stanmore Park and provided the above concept plan on the reverse side of that letter.
- On the 7<sup>th</sup> of December 2011 Councillor Gates advised in a 4 page letter to residents the details of Council's backflip in the Stanmore Park Motorcross relocation decision and advised that the \$3 million committed to the transformation of Stanmore Park has been re-allocated to acquiring suitable land in the area for that purpose. Councillor Gates advised she was able to get Council support via resolution that the CEO urgently investigate the purchase of a large parcel of land for recreation at Yatala.

It is now some **one and a half years since that promise** and YRA have not received any subsequent advice. We will be lobbying Council on behalf of the residents and will advise everyone if there has been any progress in due course.

## **Stanmore Road Traffic congestion:**

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of June 2011 we were advised in the Albert and Logan News that Council planning was underway for a slip lane from Stanmore Road to Old Pacific Highway.

In the article Donna Gates was quoted that it was not a major project and would cost about \$100,000.00, and that the funding had come from the 2010-2011 Gold coast council budget.

The article went on to say that work should start in the next couple of months. It was claimed in the article that although not a major project it would improve the congestion a great deal.

As it is 2 years since that article was written and there is no evidence of work on this badly needed slip lane we will also be requesting an update from Council and will advise everyone when more information is made available.

**Notice to our readers**, Newspaper articles and letters referred to in our Newsletter are available upon request.

They have not been included in our Newsletter in order to keep it brief and more to the point.

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As residents of Yatala we face many challenges ahead, but with the assistance of the local community and the support of the OPA I'm confident we can maintain our beautiful area and school facilities. Our goal is to work with local industry, the Gold Coast Council and State Government to achieve a fair and balanced outcome for all concerned.

Brad Atkins  
YRA Chairman.

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## **STOP PRESS, LATE INCLUSION:**

It has been brought to our attention on 17/6/13 that the Gold Coast City Council voted to direct the CEO to resolve the Appeal. This means the council will not defend the case to stop the biomass development at 126 Sandy Creek Road. Needless to say we are bitterly disappointed with this outcome, as I'm sure the entire community will be.

We will monitor, where possible, developments as they occur and keep everyone informed.



**MISSION STATEMENT: "A Community voice surrounding topics which impact the lifestyle, health and environment of residents near commercial and industrial developments in the Yatala Enterprise Area"**

**ORMEAU PROGRESS ASSOCIATION Inc. (OPA): From 01 January 2013, YRA has merged with OPA and is a WORKING GROUP which is part of OPA. OPA has been incorporated since 1989.**

### **Disclaimer:**

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