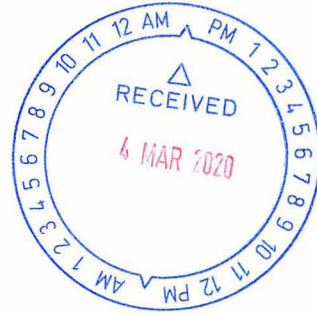


CITY OF GREATER GEELONG

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Committee Secretary
Senate Community Affairs References Committee
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

28 February 2020

Dear Committee Secretary,

Re: Submission to Senate Community Affairs References Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to Senate Community Affairs References Committee in response to investigations into a possible cancer cluster on the Bellarine Peninsula, Victoria.

As the municipal authority for the Bellarine Peninsula, the role of the City in this matter to date has been responding to community inquiries and supporting the Department of Health and Human Services in the dissemination of information.

The City is not in a position to comment on whether or not a cancer cluster exists, as this is not within our expertise or jurisdiction. The City's attached submission provides the Committee with the matters raised by the community over the past 18 months and City's responses.

Throughout this matter, the City has remained committed to transparency with our community and all agencies involved.

Please note that any reports or data referred to in this submission can be made available to the Committee.

We also have reports and detailed information regarding this matter available on our website at www.geelongaustralia.com.au/mosquitoes.

We welcome any further queries or requests for assistance in this matter which should be directed to the City's Director Planning, Design and Development

Yours sincerely

Martin Cutter
Chief Executive Officer

Attach: Submission to Senate Inquiry into a possible cancer cluster on the Bellarine Peninsula

THE CITY OF
GREATER GEELONG

SUBMISSION



SENATE INQUIRY INTO A POSSIBLE CANCER CLUSTER ON THE BELLARINE PENINSULA

1. INTRODUCTION

Thank you for providing the opportunity for the City of Greater Geelong (the City) to make a submission to Senate Community Affairs References Committee in response to investigations into a possible cancer cluster on the Bellarine Peninsula, Victoria.

The City notes the terms of reference for this investigation include particular reference to:

- a. the health concerns of local residents;*
- b. the incidence of cancer cases in the area, and any possible environmental or other contributing factors;*
- c. the evidence, approach and outcomes concerning the Victorian Chief Health Officer's investigation of cancer rates on the Bellarine Peninsula; and*
- d. any other related matter.*

Our submission aims to outline all of our actions in response to this matter, which has taken over the past 18 months which relate to parts a and b of the above noted terms of reference.

The Bellarine Peninsula is located within the municipal boundaries of the City of Greater Geelong. The City is the responsible authority for delivering many community services in this area, including environmental management, planning outcomes and community infrastructure.

It is important to note that the City is not in a position to comment on whether or not a cancer cluster exists, as this is not within our expertise or jurisdiction.

To date our role has been limited to providing information to community members concerned about suggested cancer clusters in the Bellarine region. This concern was initially relating to dieldrin traces in soil, and then shifted focus to the City's mosquito control program.

The City has assisted with disseminating information which has been provided by the Department of Health and Human Services, including the Chief Health Officers report on Bellarine cancer rates.

2. CITY RESPONSE TO CONCERNS ABOUT THE IMPACTS OF DIELDRIN USE ON THE BELLARINE

In January 2019, the City undertook a complete review of soil contamination assessments associated with rezoning of farming land to residential land in the Bellarine Peninsula area.

This review was commissioned following community concerns associated with potential human health risks due to organochlorine pesticide residues in soil, in particular dieldrin.

In 2018, at the request of the Department of Education and Training (DET), Worksafe Victoria conducted soil testing around Bellarine Secondary College in Drysdale in response to similar concerns. These tests confirmed pesticides, including dieldrin, were below levels harmful to human health. In early 2019 similar soil testing was commissioned by DET at Barwon Heads Primary school which also found no concerns.

The City's subsequent review focused on the presence of organochlorine pesticides residues, in particular dieldrin, in soil across the Bellarine Peninsula.

The review found that in all cases, the concentrations of dieldrin and DDT (dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane) detected were below the current Australian health-based screening guideline value for low-density residential land use.

Also in response to community concerns about dieldrin in soil, the Department of Health and Human Services co-ordinated a Community Open House event. The City played a key role in hosting this event.

The Open House was held in Barwon Heads on Monday 25 February 2019 and provided an opportunity for the Bellarine Peninsula community to meet face-to-face with experts from agencies such as the Environment Protection Authority, Agriculture Victoria, WorkSafe Victoria and the Department of Health and Human Services.

3. MOSQUITO MANAGEMENT PROGRAM – HISTORICAL RECORD AND CURRENT PROGRAM

Following the community information session regarding dieldrin, community concern then shifted to the City's mosquito treatment program.

The City's mosquito management program operates to reduce mosquito levels in the community. This minimises health risks associated with mosquito borne diseases, and reduces the impact of biting insects on the community's health, wellbeing and ability to enjoy the environment.

All of the products used by the City for these purposes are approved by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinarian Medicines Authority.

Over the past 18 months, the City has provided information to community members concerned about suggested links between mosquito treatment products and human illness.

The City is not aware of any science or other evidence to support this suggested link.

In response to community concern, the City undertook a significant investigation into historical mosquito management programs, including activities undertaken prior to 1993, when six separate local councils were amalgamated to form the City of Greater Geelong.

Limited information is available regarding mosquito treatment activities undertaken prior to amalgamation, however City officers have carefully examined all recorded products and procedures used in wetland locations throughout the municipality. The products used for mosquito management by the City is provided in Attachment 1.

The City is committed to open and transparent communication with its community and all agencies involved in this matter, including this inquiry.

ATTACHMENT 1



MOSQUITO MANAGEMENT PRODUCTS USED BY THE CITY OF GREATER GEELONG

| PRODUCT NAME | ACTIVE INGREDIENT | DATES USED | FORMULATION | APVMA REGISTERED AND PRODUCT NUMBER | APPLICATION METHOD AND LOCATIONS. |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|--|---|
| VECTOBAC G | Bti | Up to present | Solid- granule form | Yes- 52834 | Applied by both helicopter (since 2006) and ground based methods to wetlands and stagnant water breeding sites |
| TEKNAR | Bti | 2005 | Liquid | Yes-56979 | Applied by helicopter to Swan Bay and Lake Connewarre once in 2005, applied by ground based methods to wetlands and stagnant water breeding sites |
| VECTOBAC AS | Bti | 2011-2019 | Liquid | Yes- 53433 | Applied by ground based methods to wetlands and stagnant water breeding sites |
| ALTOSAND | S-methoprene | 2006 | Solid- sand form | No longer produced- now called Prosand | Applied by helicopter only in 2006 to wetlands (Lake Connewarre and Swan Bay, Breamlea) |
| PROSAND | s-methoprene | 2007-2019 | Solid- sand form | Yes- 59598 | Applied by helicopter 2007-2019 to wetlands (Lake Connewarre and Swan Bay, Breamlea) |
| BIOPREN 4G SAND | s-methoprene | 2012-2017 | Solid- sand form | Yes-62018 | Applied by helicopter 2012-2017 to wetlands (Lake Connewarre and Swan Bay, Breamlea) |
| BIOPREN 50 | s-methoprene | 2012-2017 | liquid | Yes-62020 | Applied by ground based methods to wetlands and stagnant water breeding sites |
| PROLINK BRIQUET | s-methoprene | 2005-2019 | Solid briquette form | Yes- 58061 | Applied by ground based methods to wetlands and stagnant water breeding sites |
| PROLINK PELLETS | s-methoprene | 2005-2019 | Solid- pellet formulation | Yes-58064 | Applied by ground based methods to wetlands and stagnant water breeding sites |
| PYROCIDE | Pyrethrin, piperonyl butoxide | 2007, 2010 | Liquid | Yes-54596 | Applied by ULV fogger to dense vegetation in 2007- Barwon Heads locations include: Rondor Caravan Park, Barwon Heads Caravan Park, Barwon Heads Reserve |
| TWILIGHT | Phenothrin, Piperonyl butoxide | 2007,2010, 2012 | Liquid | Yes-61070 | Applied by ULV fogger to dense vegetation in 2010- Barwon Heads Golf Course |
| PY-FOG | Pyrethrum extract, piperonyl butoxide | Up to 2010 | Liquid | Yes-32710 | Applied by Thermal fogger |

Abate was used for a short period between 1984-1987 in a powder form to stagnant water/drains, as well as a one-off helicopter trial in 1998. Abate contains the active ingredient temephos, which is still approved by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority for mosquito management