

Minutes

Air Pollution Expert Advisory Committee

**Held Tuesday 8 February 2011
73 Miller Street, North Sydney**

Attended:

Members: Prof. Bruce Armstrong, Prof. Guy Marks, Dr Mark Hibberd, Prof. Michael Hensley (teleconference)

Observers: Dr Kerry Chant, Prof. Wayne Smith, Dr Vicky Sheppard, Prof. Bin Jalaludin, Dr Michael Staff (proxy for Dr Jeremy McAnulty), Prof. David Durrheim, Dr Richard Broome, Mr Nathan Aust (teleconference).

Apologies:

Prof. Alison Jones

Minutes: Minutes for previous meeting were agreed by the EAC to be true and accurate.

Business arising

Campaign Monitoring:

EAC approved the purchase of the Osaris equipment, and agreed for Dr Hibberd to engage a consultant to conduct this phase of the work.

Health study protocol:

A draft of the modular Health Study protocol containing five work packages was presented by Prof. Jalaludin, with discussion on the changes from the previous draft.

- Work Package 1
 - The committee approved the protocol for WP1.
 - It was agreed that a working group should be established to review the information currently available on particle speciation in the Hunter Valley. Dr Hibberd, Prof. Jones and Prof Durrheim were nominated for this group.
- Work Package 2
 - A wide ranging discussion took place about the feasibility of this part of the study.
 - It was agreed that the sample should be stratified by either modelled exposure or by proximity to known sources of particulates.
 - It was agreed that the asthma component was the strongest part of this study and that this component could be further strengthened by including longitudinal measurement of symptoms and lung-function in a sub-set of the sample.

- Concerns were expressed about the value of the cardiovascular component of this package. It was agreed that the measurements required were likely to substantially increase the burden on patients and, due to the sample size and a lack of studies with which to compare results, was unlikely to yield useful outcomes.
- It was agreed that cardiovascular measurements should not be undertaken.
- Work Package 3
 - The committee expressed reservations about the case-cohort study design. Specifically, if the cohort is selected after stratification by exposure (see WP2), it will not be possible to generalise the risk factors measured in the cohort to the rest of the population from which the cases will come.
 - The committee agreed not to proceed with this work package.
- Work Package 4
 - The committee gave in principle approval to this part of the study, but requested that further investigation be undertaken to ensure the odds ratio used to calculate the sample size are plausible.
- Work Package 5
 - The committee approved this work package.
 - EHB agreed to contact DECCW/Planning to find out the process for notification of when and where blasting is to take place.

Actions:

1. Dr Hibberd to arrange a contract for maintenance of monitoring equipment.
2. Dr Hibberd, Prof Jones and Prof Durrheim to form a working group and review the literature on particle speciation in the Hunter and elsewhere in Australia
3. Prof Marks and Prof Jalaludin to calculate statistical power, including design effect from cluster sampling for WP2 for respiratory outcomes; and to recheck whether the effect size used for the sample size calculation of WP4 is plausible.
4. EHB to contact DECCW/Planning to find out the process for notification of when and where blasting is to take place in order that WP5 protocols can be finalised.

Biosolids

A paper was presented outlining the background to and objectives of the NSW *Environmental Guidelines: Use and Disposal of Biosolids Products (EPA 1997)*.

Actions:

1. Dr Sheppard to review the paper to ensure that NSW Health's input into the development of the guideline is adequately reflected.
2. Add a 3rd recommendation:

"Results of compliance monitoring are made publically available on the NSW Department of planning's website."

Blasting

This item was held over until the next meeting. It was noted that the Work Package 5 of the health study will address the health impacts of blasting.

Next meeting: To be scheduled (2nd week in March)