

Community Reference Group

Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 25 August 2021 at 5.30pm

Venue: Microsoft Teams online meeting

Present:

Name	Organisation
Matt Ball	Ports of Auckland
Alistair Kirk	Ports of Auckland
Rosie Mercer	Ports of Auckland
Julie Wagener	Ports of Auckland
Morgan MacFadyen	Ports of Auckland
Nigel Ironside	Ports of Auckland
Ardeth Lobet	City Centre Residents' Group
Bruce Barton	Local resident
Gayle Bennett	Emily Place
Graham Bush	Campaign for Better Transport
Luke Niue	Parnell Community Committee
Mike Blackburn	Parnell Community Committee
Michael McKeown	City Centre Residents' Group
Paul McLuckie	148 Quay Street
Rick Ellis	Gladstone Apartments
Tim Coffey	Local Resident

Apologies: Wayne Thompson, Mike Lightfoot, Allan D'Souza, Craig Sain, Wayne Mills, Stephen Kraemer, Dennis Knill

Agenda

TIMING	AGENDA ITEM	OWNER	SLIDE
5:30pm	Welcome and confirmation of last meeting's minutes	Matt Ball	1 – 3
5:35pm	General Business Update	Matt Ball	4
5:45pm	COVID-19 Update	Alistair Kirk	5
6:00pm	Environmental Update	Nigel Ironside	6
6:15pm	AOB	Matt Ball	7
6.30pm	Close	Matt Ball	8

Open:

Matt Ball opened the meeting at 5.32pm and reminded everyone of meeting etiquette for using Microsoft Teams.

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed and the agenda for the current meeting presented at 5.33pm.

General Business Update – 5.35pm – Matt Ball – Slide 4

At 5.35pm Matt Ball provided the general business update, explaining the main areas we are focusing on is safety, operations and automation.

Safety

On safety, this is a sombre time for the port, with it being nearly a year since the fatal accident and nearly three years since the one prior.

The Construction Health and Safety New Zealand (CHASNZ) report commissioned by us and Auckland Council was released in March 2021. We have been busy implementing the recommendations. Of the 45 total, to date we have finished 16, 24 are in progress and five are yet to start, with a plan in place for their implementation. We have a plan in place to ensure these are all completed by June 2022, ideally, they will be complete well before that though.

We have also implemented our own safety and wellbeing framework, work that was underway before the CHASNZ report was released. We are pleased that the recommendations from that report aligned with our framework and all of the recommendations have been included in it.

The picture on the slide shows our night shift stevedoring team trialling a new lighting rig configuration, something that was suggested to us by frontline staff. This is an example of how we're improving the way we talk about safety.

It was also heartening for us a business to hear from Auckland council that they welcomed the work we're doing and are pleased with the progress we're making. This aligns with the feedback we're getting from external partners and our own staff.

Operations

Generally, since the last meeting things have improved operationally. We haven't had a ship waiting at anchor for several days, if not weeks. We have improved productivity somewhat, but not yet at the level we want – we're still working toward that. Partially due to COVID-19, our operations ourselves, staff hours etc.

Automation

Automation was suspended in June over a potential safety issue. That particular issue has been looked at and fixes developed. We were doing testing, but at Alert Level 4 we can't do any of the on-site testing due to our COVID-19 controls. There is other work that is still underway off-site.

Board of Director changes

Our Board Chair, Bill Osborne, resigned and will be leaving at the end of September. As acknowledged by Mayor Phil Goff, Bill's done a great job of steadyng the ship following the challenges we've faced. He's sharpened the focus on getting the essentials right.

Jan Dawson has been appointed to the board and will join the next Board meeting. She is a professional director and has an impressive CV, currently serving as Chair of Westpac and Deputy Chair of Air NZ, alongside a multitude of other roles. We are looking forward to having her on the board.

COVID-19 Update – 5.45pm – Alistair Kirk – Slide 5

At 5.40pm Alistair Kirk, as the lead of the port's pandemic emergency management team (PEMT), managing the response to COVID-19.

Alistair advised as a business we have been researching and preparing for a Delta variant outbreak, we recognised it would be different than previous outbreaks due to the transmissibility and contagiousness. We knew this meant we would need to increase or controls, as has also been echoed in the Government's response.

Following the Government's announcement on Tuesday 17 August, our PEMT was re-established that night and by Wednesday morning we were back up and ready for Alert Level 4 with health screening at the two entrances to the port, stevedores were back in their work bubbles with separate portacoms and assigned vehicles, and masks distributed across the business. This went smoothly for us. The rest of the week has seen us refining what we're doing, we've been communicating heavily with staff and other port users.

The port is an essential service and continues to operate, allowing for the movement of all freight through the supply chain.

With the growing list of locations of interest and the need for people to isolate, we are expecting to have some impact on labour resource as a result of this, as many organisations are.

The PEMT meet either daily, or every few days to discuss the controls we have in place and ensure we are satisfied with compliance from staff. We are very happy with what we are seeing, especially from our stevedores. We have been working through some challenges, for example with trucking industry as we have had some issues with some members of the industry not wearing masks on-site.

One positive result we are seeing from this is that the frontline staff who weren't already vaccinated, have come forward to be vaccinated, with many vaccinated yesterday (Tuesday 24 August) as Auckland District Health Board have just re-established on-site vaccinations for our staff. Testing compliance is good and continues.

Environmental Update – 6.00pm – Nigel Ironside – Side 6

At 5.45pm Nigel Ironside provided an environmental update.

Channel deepening

We are still in front of the Environment Court in relation to the disposal of dredged material. The consent we were issued last year has been appealed by two groups. We had a preliminary jurisdictional hearing in July 2021 to look at the issue of the influence the Resource Management Act (RMA). We have a disposal consent issued in 2019 under the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) act. Those appealing our dredging consent, would also like their appeal to influence our disposal consent, even though they are issued under different acts. One of the appellants have also sought a judicial review on our disposal permit, so we are now facing legal challenges for both the dredging and disposal of dredged material consents.

Regular operations

In regard to day-to-day operations, we continue to operate. Our shipping and container movements don't tend to have any environmental issues. The bulk cargoes we handle tend to be more delicate operations with potential to have environmental issues.

We're working with our various tenants and third-party operators to improve environmental practices. One such example is that we're meeting with Holcim to workshop how to reduce emissions of cement dust following a few minor incidents.

Noise

Another issue we're working on is the low frequency throbbing noise emitted from some ships, which tends to be caused by the exhaust stacks from auxiliary generators. When we have one that is particularly bad, we can monitor it or find out the next time its due in port to set up monitoring. This is also in conjunction with other ports. We are taking a collaborative approach to this and engaging directly with the shipping lines and we get good responses from them to find ways to improve it.

Following this sort of engagement on similar occasions, we have been informed that up to five vessels have been withdrawn by shipping lines from their NZ services due to the noise impact. We're working to put together a specification to the lines to ensure new ships meet expectations for noise generation and performance. It is all voluntary, as we don't have the ability to regulate, but we're getting good engagement and it's looking promising.

During the last Alert Level 4 lockdown in March 2020, we had noise monitors in place on the port and in the community – in Devonport and Parnell. We don't have these in place for the current lockdown came into effect suddenly, but the report from last year helped us to validate the port noise model.

At 5.54pm, via the chat function in Microsoft Teams, Bruce Barton asked if Ports of Auckland wanted residents to call when a ship with the throbbing noise was in port? Matt Ball responded and said it would be best to instead email feedback@poal.co.nz with the details and then we can log it.

6.15pm AOB – Matt Ball – Slide 7

Michael McKeown also asked via the chat function if there was an update on the public space atop the car handling building? Alistair Kirk responded and advised that unfortunately we've had to push that work out another 12 months, due to the financial pressures the port is under at the moment. There are several projects that have been pushed out because of that. We are committed to completing the rooftop park though and it will happen but will take a bit longer than originally planned.

Mike Blackburn asked what percentage of frontline works are vaccinated. Alistair Kirk responded and said the figure earlier this week was 66% have received at least one dose. That figure will have increased quite significantly this week as vaccines were brought back on-site as of Tuesday and we saw a huge uptake – he expects it will be at approx. 80%. The way the government reports vaccination rates – with vaccinated and those booked to be vaccinated – most of them will be. Mike Blackburn also asked about the requirement for contractors or anyone entering the port to be vaccinated. Alistair Kirk said the vaccination order put out by the Government is for those who work on board ships, must be vaccinated by the end of September and that includes contractors. There is currently no requirement for those who work solely on land to be vaccinated, as they are not covered by that order.

Mike Blackburn asked about what Nigel had been referring to in relation to spillages from Holcim. Nigel Ironside clarified that there had been some small spillages of cement dust and we were working with them as to how to best utilise their equipment and practices to protect the environment, it is difficult because cement is an intense and aggressive product.

Mike Blackburn then asked about the budget for the rooftop park on top of the car handling building, as he thought it had already been budget for, so he didn't understand how there now couldn't be money for it. Alistair Kirk said it was in the budget, but we've

had to spread the expenditure out over a few more years because income is down, and profitability is down.

Gayle Bennett had provided some questions over email before the meeting, which Matt Ball now read through to answer. Gayle had asked if the material from dredging could be repurposed and used for reclamation to perhaps widen Tamaki Drive for example – she acknowledged this would need input from Auckland Transport and Auckland Council. Matt Ball responded and said the dredged material was used for Ports of Auckland reclamation, work that was likely due to finish over the next year or so. Nigel Ironside then added that there is a working group across Auckland council that we are a part of that looks at opportunities to use dredged material for beneficial reuse. We are actively looking at these initiatives and figuring out how to maximise the material.

Gayle Bennett also asked about coal and coal dust and the operational measures that are in place to ensure the loads are covered to minimise coal dust. Nigel Ironside explained that the coal we handle is covered and dust is well-managed. Coal comes into the port as a bulk product, and it is taken from the hold of a ship using a grab. That volume is then transferred to a hopper, trucks drive underneath the hopper and are directly loaded. All trucks must be covered – these are high-sided tandem vehicles and once they're full, they're covered before they drive off. There is very little interaction with the material and the dust is very well contained.

Gayle Bennett also asked about the tornado and subsequent high winds at the South Auckland Freight Hub (SAFH), asked if the images shown in the media for both occasions were of the same or different events and noted that the stacks appeared to be quite high. Matt Ball explained that the first incident was a tornado, which is more extreme than high winds, it's very intense and brief. The second event was high winds. The shots in the media showed two different operations. The very tall stacks (eight or so high) were of an empty container yard – we don't run or operate those, the one in South Auckland is run by a company called ContainerCo. The operation we run at Wiri is not an empty container yard, it's a freight hub. Much like us though, ContainerCo also have high wind protocols such as stopping work, reducing stack heights, or adjusting the stack profile. The tornado was so sudden and unpredicted though, that there was not an opportunity to enact those protocols beforehand. And to give you an idea of the strength and ferocity of the tornado, it actually picked up full containers. Matt Ball clarified that containers were not instrumental in the tragic death that occurred on that day.

Alistair Kirk added that empty yards do have stringent controls in place for high winds, the way they block stack containers, the direction they stack, the proximity of containers to boundaries etc. However, it is important to note that empty container yards are struggling to keep their stack height down due to congestion in the wider supply chain. The tornado was a very different event to high winds though.

Paul McLuckie asked about something he witnessed in mid-June where the ship *Playa Zahara* was berthed at Captain Cook West, two weeks later off the coast of New Plymouth with COVID-19. He explained the situation as being two black, double-cab Utes full of people who then “swarmed” over the vessel, none of them in PPE, the ship then departed in the middle of the night, which they believe to be a crew change. He said it was so bizarre that the residents in his building took notice of it. Alistair Kirk said

Ports of Auckland does not allow crew changes in Auckland unless the incoming crew have done Government MIQ for 14 days. If there was a crew exchange happening, they would have gone through 14 days of MIQ ad have negative COVID-19 tests and thus not been required to wear PPE, just like anyone else coming out of MIQ. Not all other ports are doing the same though. There was an occasion recently where crew were trying to avoid our requirements by driving people from Auckland to New Plymouth after only completing two days in MIQ (which is the Government's minimum requirement for international crew changes), but we have more stringent controls in place and do not allow that. Alistair said he was not aware of that crew change happening without those measures being in place.

Paul McLuckie followed up this discussion with an email exchange to Matt Ball and Morgan MacFadyen and asked that this email be included in the meeting minutes. You can see the email chain copied and pasted at the end of the minutes.

Luke Niue followed up about a request made in the last meeting of 11 ships at anchor. Matt Ball responded and said that we did not have that image, but the media had provided their own. The image as sourced from Otago Daily Times and Stuff from December 2020 show ten and seven ships at anchor in the gulf respectively, pasted below.



<https://www.odt.co.nz/star-news/star-business/ships-waiting-over-week-be-processed>



<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/coronavirus/300175839/covid19-supply-chain-delays-sees-backlog-of-freight-ships-docked-near-rangitoto-island>

Luke Niue then commented that at 5pm on the day of this meeting (Wednesday 25 August), during Alert Level 4 he had seen trucks queuing along Tamaki Drive to access Fergusson Container Terminal. He witnessed one impatient truck driver who drove up the right-hand lane, which is not for turning traffic, and proceeded to block it while he waited to turn left into the port. He said that the issue was obviously a result of the roadworks Auckland Transport were carrying out which had put the slip-lane out of action. Matt Ball commented that he was not aware of any particular issues today that could cause that congestion. Matt Ball added that we had recently implemented a new vehicle booking system for trucks, which has actually seen truck turn times steadily reducing. A potential reason for the congestion could be that because of our strict COVID-19 controls for stevedoring staff, the shift changeover took longer now to allow for additional cleaning and ensure the work bubbles were protected, which could slow operations. Alistair Kirk added that the port was not very happy with Auckland Transport who are proposing to get rid of the left turn slip-lane into the port which creates congestion with trucks waiting to turn.

Luke Niue raised the issue of dust with gypsum and other breakbulk cargo. He asked if we are doing proper visual monitoring and if there was time-lapse footage of breakbulk operations in high winds to show that we aren't having spillage or anything. Nigel Ironside said we do monitor closely and in high winds will stop operations. We also use the likes of misters to help mitigate dust.

Luke Niue asked about a particular noisy ship at Fergusson, but did not provide the name of it, who's operations involved a lot of banging and crashing and if it can be monitored when next in port. Nigel Ironside advised yes, he was across it and would include the two vessels that were in at the time on the register.

Luke Niue then followed up on generator noise and the five that will no longer call Auckland. Luke asked if the *Aglaia* was included in that five. Nigel said he would check.

Paul McLuckie asked again about *Playa Zahara* operations in Auckland and some further discussion followed.

Mike Blackburn followed up on Gayle's earlier question and asked about dredging and the issue of setting up a system of finding out where dredging would go. Nigel Ironside said yes that is all being covered in the earlier mentioned working group with Auckland Council.

Morgan MacFadyen also informed the group that this would be her last with the CRG as she was resigning from the port and moving to a new role elsewhere. She thanked the group and wished them all the best.

6.30pm Close – Matt Ball – Slide 8

Matt Ball closed the meeting at 6.35pm.

Next meeting: 5.30pm, Wednesday 1 December 2021

Email exchange between Paul McLuckie and Matt Ball (Morgan MacFadyen in copy) that Paul McLuckie asked to be included in minutes:

From: Matt Ball <BallM@poal.co.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 26 August 2021 4:59 p.m.
To: Paul McLuckie <paul@148quaystreet.co.nz>
Cc: Morgan MacFadyen <MacFadyenM@poal.co.nz>
Subject: RE: Crew change in Auckland - more information (2)

Hi Paul

They were in Auckland from 07 June to 17 June and offloaded several crew during this time.

The vessel then went to New Plymouth and took on crew. They departed New Plymouth on the 20th and came back in July after others aboard got sick.

They avoided our strict rules but infected the ship as a result.

We have triple checked this and are 100% confident no crew boarded in Auckland.

Cheers
Matt

From: Paul McLuckie <paul@148quaystreet.co.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 26 August 2021 3:31 p.m.
To: Matt Ball <BallM@poal.co.nz>
Cc: Morgan MacFadyen <MacFadyenM@poal.co.nz>
Subject: RE: Crew change in Auckland - more information (2)

Hi Matt;

Same email with minor updating:

Interesting voyage history of Playa Zahara from vesseltracker.com:

(<https://www.vesseltracker.com/en/Ships/Playa-Zahara-9297656.html>)

LATEST PORTS

ALL PORTS

Port	Arrival	Departure	Duration
?	2021-07-17	2021-07-28	10d 1h 53m
?	2021-07-12	2021-07-13	5h
?	2021-06-19	2021-06-20	7h 41m
?	2021-06-07	2021-06-17	9d 4h 20m
?	2021-04-09	2021-04-22	13d 17h 38m
>New Plymouth	2021-02-28	2021-02-28	28m
New Plymouth	2021-02-22	2021-02-24	1d 10h 56m
Auckland	2021-02-15	2021-02-19	3d 23h 43m
Auckland	2020-07-05	2020-07-09	3d 4h 45m
Auckland	2020-04-14	2020-04-17	2d 10h 17m

Note: All times are in UTC

Unfortunately it doesn't show the actual ports for the top 5 entries but note that it was in some port (not Auckland) from 07/06/2021 - 17/06/2021 (so much for it being at sea this time) but then was in a port for 7hr 41m (which is about the time that it was in Auckland) from 19/06/2021 - 20/06/21 (which would be the afternoon of 20/06 our time, it left around 1am).

Then the next port call was on 13/07/2021 which we know was Taranaki and when they found most of the crew had Covid so refused it entry, then on to Lyttleton arriving 17/07/2021 for 10 days.

So in other words the 7hr 41 min stop as above was definitely Auckland.

Why would it spend fuel coming into Auckland for just 7hr 41 if not for a crew change? (I know that ships sometime come in for refuelling but we don't remember seeing the refuelling tanker or any land based tankers near it, nor any provisioning vehicles).

Not forgetting that the night of the 20th fits exactly with the MOH statement that the crew arrived on 18/06 and spent 2 days in MIQ!!

Kind regards

Paul McLuckie

From: Paul McLuckie <paul@148quaystreet.co.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 26 August 2021 11:06 a.m.
To: Matt Ball <BallM@poal.co.nz>
Cc: Morgan MacFadyen <MacFadyenM@poal.co.nz>
Subject: Crew change in Auckland

Hi Matt;

Many thanks for your email....

At 09:25 a.m. 26/08/2021, Matt Ball wrote:

Hi Paul,

This is indeed an interesting case.

Can you recall the date when you saw the activity? Was it June 18?

It would have been about then (or rather around the 20th, as the MOH website says they arrived in NZ on June 18th and spent 2 days in managed isolation).

Certainly it was about 2-3 weeks before the news started breaking about the Covid aboard the Playa Zahara when it first arrived in New Plymouth in early July so the time fits.

But of course you would know exactly, when was the Playa Zahara in Auckland?

We've had the 14-day rule in place for some time now, which is why there are often crew flying into Auckland who then transfer to vessels at other ports. That was the case for the Viking Bay.

If there was a crew transfer after only two days MIQ then it can only have happened in contravention of our rules and without our knowledge.

I'm not convinced that is the case, but let me know if you can provide more information on the date you saw the activity and I'll see what I can find out.

As I say I say above if you could just check your records as to when the Playa Zahara was in Auckland you can quickly see if it was around the 20th June

I note that the info from MoH says that there was a crew change on ~~June-18~~ June 20th - 21st (they arrived in NZ on 18th June and spent 2 days in MIQ) but it doesn't say which port it happened at. It could easily have been at Taranaki, which is where they were going for another crew change in July when they found the infection.

No it couldn't have been Taranaki, the covid infection was detected when they were first tested when they first arrived in New Plymouth in early July - these guys arrived 18th June.

Sure the MOH press release doesn't explicitly say they changed in Auckland but its pretty clear that it was in Auckland - where was the Playa Zahara around 20th June?

As noted we saw around 6 - 8 people arrive in two black double-cab utes and go on board around that time .

As far as I am aware (we did check at the time) the Playa Zahara's first call in NZ was in Auckland (where we saw what we now believe to be the the crew change take place, we originally thought it was a major Customs exercise) and then their next proposed port of call was New Plymouth where they were tested on arrival and found that 13 of the 16 crew were ill with Covid.

We already do have in place rules that require proof of a 14 day stay in MIQ plus a negative test,

Thats great

so for the change above to have happened at Auckland after only two days would require some subterfuge.

Yes that's what I thought, as I said in my last email it appears that what the MOH were telling you was totally different to what was actually happening.

It's worth noting that the 14 day rule is ours – the government requirement is only two or three days and a negative test.

Which is absolutely ridiculous and typical of all the holes that the government allows at the border (same as airline crew) meaning that its been pure luck that we've lasted this long without another lockdown.

Kind regards

Paul

From: Paul McLuckie <paul@148quaystreet.co.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 25 August 2021 6:43 p.m.
To: Matt Ball <BallM@poal.co.nz>
Cc: Morgan MacFadyen <MacFadyenM@poal.co.nz>
Subject: Crew change in Auckland

Hi Matt;

Here is the link to the article on the MOH website

<https://www.health.govt.nz/news-media/media-releases/update-whole-genome-sequencing-playa-zahara>

Note that:

"Swabs were taken when the crew first arrived at Port Taranaki on Tuesday after reports of a flu-like illness on board. Standard Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) protocol, including the appropriate use of PPE, was used throughout the crew's testing."

Note that when it arrived in Taranaki was already full of covid so it wasn't caused by any crew change-over in New Plymouth or crew driving from Auckland.

And if that had actually been the case then how did they get out of MIQ to drive to NP in the first place?

"The most recent crew aboard the Playa Zahara had arrived in New Zealand on June 18 and spent two days at a managed isolation facility in Auckland. They provided negative pre-departure tests before arriving in New Zealand and again tested negative before boarding the ship."

Note that this crew arrived on Jun 18th, well before the ship arrived at New Plymouth mid July.

I don't believe that you would mislead the meeting by saying that they hadn't changed in Auckland when they actually had (and we watched them arrive in bulk) so clearly there has been a total breakdown in communication between what the Health Dept was telling you about MIQ

and what was actually the case.

Fortunately there wasn't an outbreak with this with NZ drivers driving these infected people to the port but this situation of infected crew being driven around Auckland by kiwi drivers could have easily started an outbreak, which brings me back to my original point, can you please assure everyone that no ship will ever again be allowed to berth in Auckland for a crew change unless you have definitive proof that the crew has indeed been in MIQ for the required 14 days.

Please include this email in the minutes of the meeting.

Thanks

Kind regards

Paul McLuckie