



Session Report

Neutrog Community Reference Panel

24th November 2025

democracyCo

Background

Neutrog, with the support of local independent facilitation company DemocracyCo have set up the Neutrog Community Reference Panel (the Panel) to provide ongoing feedback on how Neutrog can meet the expectations of residents and businesses in the community.

The Panel will help Neutrog to continue to provide economic opportunities in the Hills, while minimising odour, dust, and fire risk.

About the Panel

The Panel is made up of a diverse mix of approximately 10 community members including residents, community group representatives, staff, suppliers, and representatives from local government. Importantly, the panel members all have different lived experiences of Neutrog and their operations, and therefore will be vital to ensure accurate, balanced and agreed-upon feedback can be reflected to Neutrog. Initially the panel will be focused on providing specific feedback to Neutrog on the areas of fire and air quality, with the intention to form meaningful actions for Neutrog. Once these sessions are complete, we hope Panel members will continue to meet over the next two years to provide ongoing feedback, creating an important mechanism for transparency and sustained communication between the community and Neutrog.

The Panel is being facilitated by DemocracyCo using deliberative and co-design engagement methods which ensure constructive, respectful, and productive conversations.

About this Report

After every meeting of the Panel a report from that session will be produced – this is that Report. This report seeks to provide a summary overview of:

- The process the Panel went through in this session,
- The Panels thoughts and reflections - where specifically captured by the Panel on paper/post it notes (or similar) or captured by facilitators (as requested by Panel participants) in the Google Doc worksheet.
- speakers and what they talked about.

This report **doesn't** capture all the discussion, points or questions made by Panel members throughout the session.

Session 4

24th November 2025

Overview of Process

The fourth session of the panel was focused on the issue of Air Quality (odour and dust). The Panel spent the evening developing their objectives and ideas for action – and discussing the issues and concerns of the community.

Our Speakers

There were no scheduled speakers.

Hazel Ashby and Tony Aloisi joined the panel to listen and observe. At the start of the evening, Hazel clarified a question which had arisen the previous week about pile heights. Her explanatory slide is attached to the slide deck for this session.

Discussion Themes

Prior to the session, Emily from DemocracyCo did some work to organise the panels thoughts from Session 3 into some 'strawman' objectives – draft objectives for the Panel to consider (and reword as appropriate).

The three themes were:

1. Improving liveability
2. Evidence based action.
3. Honesty and transparency.

The Panel undertook an 'ideas rating sheet' activity to assess each of the draft objectives – improving them with further ideas and suggestions. Each of these three themes was supported by the Panel.

Following this activity the Panel went into 'writing' mode – where facilitators documented the agreed thoughts of Panel members under each objective in more detail using a Google doc.

The notes below capture have been taken directly from the Google doc.

Improve our liveability

<p>What is the objective?</p>	<p>Ensure Neutrog is exhausting all means to eliminate odour and dust in a way that protects community health and wellbeing.</p>
<p>What issues / concerns / worries and problems will be addressed by action on this?</p>	<p>Take actions to eliminate odour and dust from Neutrog, so the Kanmantoo and local community will be more liveable - cleaner air, more comfort at home, more enjoyment of our outside spaces and less mental health impacts felt in the community. (consider a timeframe)</p>
<p>How would we know this outcome was being met - what would we see?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting conditions of licence - according to the EPA • Less complaints, preferably no complaints • Regular community updates - via a standing panel/ committee (face to face that people can observe) - could be monthly about their actions/ what is happening to address the issues • Running record of actions taken by Neutrog about what they have done • Benchmark with other fertiliser companies (with other similar products)
<p>Your ideas for action</p>	
<p>What should Neutrog do?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data gathered and shared – that provides trusted information on the impacts on health of Neutrog’s dust and odour. (We want to know that we are safe. Is this a public health issue? Is there a direct correlation between health and the organic materials?). • Operational actions – continuing to manage odour and dust on the site – long term sustainable operational excellence. (Linked to compliance with EPA regulations / rules/ requirements) • Exploring new technologies to support reduction of odour and dust • Explore the feasibility of a variety of methods for reducing odour and dust (for existing products) - and make transparent the results • Exploring innovations and new products and practices that further reduce the prevalence of odour and dust (aka Chockablock) • Explore becoming members of Fertiliser’s Australia (or other relevant industry body) • advising community on bio security measures <p>Improved Communication by Neutrog / Building trust and relationships with the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of opportunity to report / info about the reporting process and providing feedback / reporting back on results • Community updates - about activity at the site that might affect odour and dust and impact on the community

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ feedback loops with the community about what is going on for community as well
What should Local Government do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advocacy role • community development role
What should the EPA do?	<p>Advising community on conditions of licence that address biosecurity concerns and risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build faith in the EPA by ...Engaging with the community - through a dedicated community engagement officer. - Appropriately resource breaches of licence or potential issues with Neutrog - Transparency of compliance visits to Neutrog and results of these visits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is there a score card? - Faster response times to complaints - if 5 people are complaining NOW report now - not in 5weeks / 2 months etc
What should the community do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report odour and dust when it is experienced <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Citizen Science portal - Time bound portal (set up by Neutrog- as above) • Engage with Neutrog by reporting

Evidence based action

<p>What is the objective?</p>	<p>Ensure Neutrog's actions, improvements and community reporting processes are grounded in clear data, science, monitoring, timelines and transparent evidence, so the community can see what is being done, understand its impact, and trust the decisions being made.</p> <p>We want to ensure that when an event is being reported, there is feedback - closing the loop with the community</p> <p>Ensure that reporting of complaints is transparent (made available to the community) and identifies multiple reports from a single source.</p>
<p>What issues / concerns / worries and problems will be addressed by action on this?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • want to improve understanding in the community of when things happen, why they happen (ie why there is odour or dust at a particular time in the operation cycle). • understand the production processes and their impact on air quality • improve understanding in the community of odour and dust in a way that anyone in the community can understand it • community want to know what is real and true • community want to know what impacts odour and dust have on health • we want to understand what is possible - is there a possibility of improvements noting elimination might not be possible
<p>How would we know this outcome was being met - what would we see?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reports coming through to the community in real time • actions documented • honest feedback on what was done
<p>Your ideas for action</p>	
<p>What should Neutrog do?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased frequency of odour monitoring and reporting – open for community to see • Building understanding in the community of the science around odour assessment & modelling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ needs to be in simple language and relevant to Neutrogs specific operations • Mapping / reporting actions over time – a simple easy to understand method that outlines events (ie complaints), timelines, responses to events and showing the impact of those responses (how did they reduce odour / dust). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ this will demonstrate that Neutrog are actioning something ○ it will be very subjective however, as some people will perceive odour differently – cause and effect are not necessarily always clear

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● One single reporting place – so reports are not duplicated and the community can see repeat complaints (from single sources). Hundreds of reports are being made to the EPA but not by hundreds of people. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ could there be an app / citizen science? ● Find a way to allow the community to indicate when air quality is good / better – Neutrog only hear when its bad, and having information that would help them understand when its better would be good ● release copies of the modelling so we can understand how estimates / figures have been arrived at <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ this modelling needs to be trusted - referenced, peer reviewed ● installation of dust monitors at strategic locations (around the town), these should be an integral part of the operation at Neutrog <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hillgrove have them located in spots around the town.
What should Local Government do?	
What should the EPA do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reform to legislation that enables EPA to better regulate this type of situation
What should the community do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Submit constructive reports that give Neutrog the information they need to be able to action reports. (Neutrog need to be able to tell the community what constitutes a constructive report).

Build trust through honesty, transparency, shared information and communication

What is the objective?	<p>Create a foundation of honesty, transparency and openness, where Neutrog and the community all have access to the same information and see clearly what's being done, enabling meaningful dialogue and trust to build over time.</p>
What issues / concerns / worries and problems will be addressed by action on this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community trust is low • Transparency is not good • Neutrog being more honest and transparent – this will take some time to be overturned • Community don't have a positive relationship with Neutrog – want community to trust and enjoy Neutrog • Want community to engage in meaningful dialogue
How would we know this outcome was being met – what would we see?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loop back all feedback into community, how it has been received and outcomes from it
Your ideas for action	
What should Neutrog do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an example to the community of what a constructive odour report looks like (ie one that will assist Neutrog to respond) • Make available to the community to same information about odour that Neutrog has – how it is perceived, assessed and measured and the variabilities in character / intensity perceptions of odour. • Provide information to the community in an easy to understand way that outlines their EPA licence conditions, industry standards, research and scientific findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Show the community how Neutrog is tracking on meeting these requirements (EPA) • Communication open and regular • Neutrog staff are here to listen to us. • Ongoing engagement (ie Hillgrove approach) - learning and replicating • corporate citizenship – play a more visible role in the community, demonstrate Neutrog is a good community citizen, support local teams and groups more. • citizen science / portal that provides feedback in a live way (including community reporting / complaints, information on air quality. • we want to see Neutrog respond to the community and tell us what they are doing • Monitor progress / EIP implementation

<p>What should Local Government do?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We want to see all parties involved in developing the EIP - Neutrog / LG / EPA and community working together to develop the EIP (within regulatory rules/ laws) • Once the EIP has been approved / agreed, if there are proposals (such as Development approval) LG would have a role
<p>What should the EPA do?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • once the EIP has been approved / agreed - the EPA monitor it adequately within agreed timelines. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ monitoring moments and timelines built into the EIP ○ penalties built into the EIP that hold Neutrog to account and ensure that the improvements are implemented.
<p>What should the community do?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give honest feedback • continue to participate in the opportunities Neutrog present.
<p>Are there any others who should be part of actions on this objective? If so who are they, and what should they be doing?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFS sign off on Neutrogs plans

Follow-up questions

One question was raised for follow-up, ideally through the broad engagement, about why this site is at Kanmantoo. The Question was *'why is the compost here, when we know the location will never be suitable?'*.

Decisions

The Panel members supported and agreed on the three objectives.

Next Steps

Due to a non-quorum at Session 2 more work is needed on fire. As a consequence a 5th session is now planned for December. The Panel have agreed that prior to Session 5, DemocracyCo will write a draft of the Panel's Report – using the work from all sessions to date. The Panel will spend Session 5 working to reach consensus/agreement on this report (with a particular focus on fire) and provide advice to Neutrog regarding the broad engagement planned for early 2026.

More Information

To find out more information visit

- DemocracyCo project website - <https://www.democracyco.com.au/whats-on/neutrog-community-reference-panel/>
- Neutrog's Community Portal - <https://neutrogcommunityportal.com.au/>