



Introduction

This Community Update has been developed to provide information to the local community about the health impact assessment (HIA) being conducted for the Narangba Industrial Estate. It follows an update sent to the community on May 2007. Information about the project can be found on the Queensland Health Website:
www.health.qld.gov.au/narangbahia.

Background

In 2006, the then Premier, the Honourable Peter Beattie, committed Queensland Health to conduct the HIA in response to concerns raised by the community after a fire at a chemical warehouse and formulation plant known as Binary Industries.

The HIA will allow a better understanding of the facts surrounding emissions from the industrial estate and the potential for health effects on local residents.

The purpose of this HIA is to identify and examine both the positive and negative impacts of the estate and provide government with a comprehensive statement of actual health risks resulting from it. This will indicate if there are health risks which need additional management strategies beyond

those already in place and, if relevant, recommendations for managing those risks according to their level of significance. It is also intended to provide government with information to:

- inform the future development of policies and projects related to industrial estates;
- increase the understanding of the health impacts of implementing comparable policies and projects elsewhere; and
- increase the evidence base to inform future HIAs around industrial estates.

In addition, some of the data collected throughout this HIA, can be used as baseline data for future evaluations of this and similar sites.

As mentioned in Community Update 1 (May 2007), a community reference group was established to oversee the health impact assessment. The group has been responsible for defining the scope of the health impact assessment and working with independent advisers to identify investigations to be conducted to gather data for the assessment.

Health impact assessment process

Health impact assessment is a process that systematically identifies and examines, in a balanced way, both the positive and negative

health impacts of an activity. HIA can be used to assess the health impacts of many different activities and policies. The level of assessment can vary from relatively simple to very complex depending on the situation. The Narangba Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is very complex and requires the input of many different professionals with considerable levels of expertise.

The HIA includes the following steps:

Screening—to determine whether or not a HIA is required and at what level of complexity;

Scoping - to identify the issues to be explored and how they can be addressed;

Health Risk Assessment—to identify the impacts of the findings, who they affect and how much;

Reporting, decision making and implementation—to draw conclusions and recommendations for actions to control risks in the future; and

Monitoring—to provide ongoing monitoring of the actual impacts and evaluate the HIA process.

Project Status

The Narangba Community Reference Group has now completed the difficult task of scoping the HIA by identifying and prioritising the main issues of concern associated with the industrial estate. The

scope includes an examination into the strategic management of incidents such as chemical fires to ensure that the community is adequately protected should future incidents occur.

From there, the Community Reference Group has had to determine what kind of information would be required to enable potential health risks to be identified. This process involved working through the issues with an independent technical adviser and a health advisory panel, who were able to provide advice and guidance about what data should be collected to support the health impact assessment. A number of studies and surveys have been commissioned to gather this information.

Much of the year has been taken up gathering data for the health risk assessment and in particular, scientific data to inform the health risk assessment step. Health risk assessment is an important step in the HIA, and pulls together the results of studies to identify the risks to the community and the level of that risk. Health risk assessment considers factors such as:

- Hazardous agents—microbiological, chemical and physical ;
- Environmental factors—changes in quality or availability of water, food, air, soil, land, waste management, physical safety and security, disease vectors;
- Exposure conditions

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- Effects on physical health
- Effects on health services
- Effects on social well-being—income, government revenues, industries, services, stress, anxiety, nuisance, beneficial effects on health.

A community survey involving more than 1000 local residents has now been completed and the results are currently being analysed. The results will provide valuable information for the HIA. Community support in participating in this survey has been greatly appreciated.

An independent review of the response (both immediate and post incident) relating to two fires which occurred in the industrial estate in 2005/2006 has commenced. This review will consider lessons learnt and actions subsequently taken since the fires, as well as considering the initial response to both events.

Timeframes and project completion

The Narangba health impact assessment was expected to be completed and presented to government by the end of 2007. However, because some vital activities have been delayed, the project will be extended to allow for all studies and activities to be completed. It is expected that the project will be completed in mid-late 2008.

Once all data has been collected and reviewed, the health impact assessment can be finalised and recommendations made. These recommendations will be included in the final report which will be provided to government for consideration. The report and the results of all monitoring and studies (including the community survey and environmental monitoring) will be publicly released once the project is completed.

Further information

Further information on the Narangba Industrial Estate Health Impact Assessment can be obtained by contacting 1800 509 220 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm) or visiting Queensland Health's website www.health.qld.gov.au/narangbahia.

To lodge a complaint about activities conducted within the Narangba industrial estate contact:

Environmental Protection Agency—1300 130 372

Caboolture Shire Council—5429 9199

Pine Rivers Shire Council—3480 6666

If you are uncertain who to contact, you are advised to contact your local council in the first instance.

If you have any concerns about your health, contact your local general practitioner.