

CASE STUDY #1

Cleanaway: From Outrage to Integrity



OVERVIEW

Historically, residents within the Sydney Olympic Park precinct complained about odour in the area, believing that the Sydney Olympic Park Liquid Waste Treatment Plant was a key source of the odour. As the owner and operator of the Treatment Plant, Cleanaway identified that a structured and proactive engagement program was required to build better stakeholder rapport.

To build trust in the engagement process, Cleanaway sought the services of David as a truly independent strategist and community reference group (CRG) chair.

OUTCOMES SOUGHT

The key outcomes sought included:

- Building trust with the community regarding Cleanaway's operation and thereby gaining social licence to operate;
- Improving the community's understanding of the facility and provide opportunities for the community to have a true voice on matters of concern; and
- Identify, as a collective group, priorities for a future in which operations could exist in harmony within the community.

BENEFITS

Independent strategic advice and chairing of reference group would provide the following:

- Playing a key part in ensuring that the community felt like Cleanaway was being open, transparent and accountable (through the approach taken to chairing the community reference group);
- Strategically contributing to a community engagement program that didn't take a 'one-size-fits-all' approach;
- Creating opportunities for the 'influencers' within the community to genuinely get involved in resolving issues; and
- Being able to support Cleanaway's Stakeholder and Community Engagement Manager in influencing operational staff to better understand the community's concerns and how to strategically respond to them.

METHODOLOGY

David's role had two key areas of focus – strategic contribution to resolving concerns and chairing of the CRG (which was populated with representatives from Cleanaway, affected residents, local Council and EPA).

Strategically, as soon as David was engaged on the program, he took a targeted approach to working with the highly influential stakeholders – those within the community and within Cleanaway who could impact the success of the program – in order to build strong relationships with them and understand the depth of their issues.

Through truly respecting concerns all parties had, he and Cleanaway's Stakeholder and Community Engagement Manager were successfully positioned to be able to provide strategic advice to operational staff and the community in order to find solutions.

With respect to chairing the CRG, he established processes that ensured that:

- Cleanaway remained transparent and accountable;
- There was a depth to the understanding of concerns across the group (not only from the community, but also from Cleanaway staff, Council and the regulatory authority);
- Meetings were always effective and efficient with the use of people's time; and
- There was true involvement of affected stakeholders.

And he employed gentle humour and a sensitivity to all group members in order to ease tensions that may occur during meetings.

Finally, David sought feedback, publicly, from the group members in order to ensure that he too was held accountable.

RESULTS

After 18 months of quarterly meetings and guiding the community every step of the way through Cleanaway's improvement and remediation program, the CRG was disbanded. The community members unanimously agreed that quarterly meetings were no longer necessary, based on Cleanaway's commitment to continue to inform the community on an as needs basis.

This was as a result of Cleanaway working through community concerns and misconceptions about the Treatment Plant, through the provision of factual information and monitoring results, supported through technical data and independent audit reports as well as through committing to open and transparent engagement.



DAVID ROSS
DIRECTOR

PO BOX 943
INGLEBURN NSW 1890
• TELEPHONE: 0402 060 649
PHOENIXSTRATEGIC.COM.AU