



By the community. For the community.

StocktonComGroup@gmail.com
stocktoncommunitygroup.com.au



Nicole Mason

Specialist Community Relations Officer

75 Greenleaf Rd Kooragang 2304

Dear Nicole,

RE: Clarification Sought around reporting of “Explosion Event” at Kooragang Thursday March 23, 2023

Our community group wants to ensure a good working relationship with Orica and ensure that Orica achieves and maintains a trusted community partner status.

The Newcastle Herald reported on an unplanned shutdown of the Orica plant on Kooragang on March 24, in which they quoted several statements from Orica. Unfortunately, our reading of the quoted Orica comments in the Herald article, fails to convey a sense of continuous safety improvement on Orica’s part. Indeed the tone seemed to suggest that this was a routine event with no follow-up safety issues. The quoted statements in the Herald article lack a plain-speaking assessment of what happened and omitted mention of several others. Examples of quoted statements are:

- a) Pressure relief valves operated according to their design
- b) No risk to Community or environment.
- c) Company self-reported event to EPA.

While we believe these statement to be true, there appear to be missing factors that have been possibly omitted that contribute to our plain speaking issue.

We seek your responses to points that appear to be omitted, namely.

- 1) Was the shutdown and pressure release under operator control or did the valves operate (as PSV’s¹) by pre-set limits (i.e. automatic failsafe mode).
- 2) Is an automatic triggering of these valves part of a standard shut-down procedure or only during an unplanned event?

¹ Introduction to Pressure Safety Valve. <https://www.theprocesspiping.com/introduction-pressure-safety-valve/>

- 3) Was the event a 'reportable incident'? That is a mandatory reporting event of a 'dangerous' nature. (which renders the 'self-reporting' issue moot.
- 4) Were the noise levels typical of a normal shutdown or not? (many residents reported unprecedented noise levels)
- 5) Is Orica intending a 'lessons learnt' assessment to prevent a similar occurrence? I.e. was the event potentially avoidable (given the leak).
- 6) Will Orica provide a community press release if and when EPA provide any feedback on the event?

Our community group feels that a clear open dialogue on the above 6 questions will help us better understand what happened here. Our concern (without being in command of more information) is that this event (had the safety valves failed to release automatically) had the potential to be a more serious event and that Orica should take advantage of the learning opportunity.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards

Stockton Community Group Inc.