



■ Oceana staff Peter Warner, Nigel Wichman and Priscilla van Neel.



■ Timothy Jacobs said Oceana must return the fishing permits to the community if they decide to move the factory

# Oceana lay-off leaves bad taste

At a meeting in Hangberg this week, residents and workers at the fish meal factory in the harbour said they would not take it closure lying down.

VERNA VAN DIEMEN

Residents and workers have vowed to fight plans to close the fish meal factory after Oceana announced on Friday August 14 that it might face closure and relocation to the group's St Helena Bay operation. At a meeting on Tuesday August 25, residents packed the Hangberg civic centre, to discuss the planned closure. Residents said they would start a petition with 10 000 signatories, 10 times more than the one by Fresh Air for Hout Bay in April, which demanded the City of Cape Town urgently address the emissions from the boiler chimneys of

the fish factory ("Sing the stink blues", Sentinel News, May 8). In the next two weeks they plan a march from Hout Bay to Cape Town, where they will hand the petition to representatives of the City, Oceana, provincial and national government. They also plan to picket in front of Oceana's factory on the harbour, and they have declared a dispute at the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA). The speakers at the meeting included Roscoe Jacobs, from the Hout Bay Civic Association, Zolani

Continued on page 3

## Protest march planned

From page 1

Mbanjwa, national fishing sector organiser for the Food and Allied Workers' Union (FAWU), and Anthony Dietrich, who was there in his capacity as the South African Communist Party provincial chairperson. He is also an advisor to the Minister of Agriculture and Fishing, Senzeni Zokwana.

Mr Jacobs said: "We will keep this factory open by all means. If it means we must become more radical, so be it. Ons het klip gegooi om ons berg te hou, so as ons klip moet gooi vir Oceana, so be it (We threw stones to hold on to our mountain and if we must throw stones to save Oceana, so be it)."

Mr Jacobs was referring to the uprising in 2010 when Hangberg residents threw stones at City of Cape Town staff, preventing them from dismantling structures which had been built in the firebreak on the Sentinel mountain.

About 50 residents and 22 officials were hurt in the clashes, including four people who each lost an eye when rubber bullets were fired at them.

Should the factory close, 98 affected shore-based employees will be offered jobs at Oceana's St Helena Bay facility or anywhere else in the group where positions may be available.

But residents say they will not only keep the factory open, but will ensure the factory runs at full capacity for 180 days a year.

Many residents at the meeting said nobody got sick as result of the smell from the fish meal factory and that tourism has grown over the past 50 years in Hout Bay, despite the smell from the factory.

Mr Jacobs said: "That smell is the smell of money. It means there is work for the people."

In a statement released through public relations company Corporate Image, Oceana said it was no longer financially viable to run its plant.

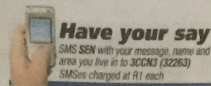
The increase in complaints from residents about the odour omitted from the factory had resulted in an increased number of inspections and audits from the City, the company said.

Oceana said the plant had been operating at a loss since it took the decision three years ago to decrease its production by 40 percent. And despite this decrease, Oceana had seen a 240% increase in complaints and invested more than R50 million in odour minimisation technology.

To become financially viable again, Oceana said, the factory would have to revert to normal production

which would result in an increase from 60 production days a year to between 120 to 180 days a year.

Mr Dietrich said: "We want their capacity to increase to 100 percent. That will mean more jobs created. The company invests 15 million annually into this community for wages. If you expand the production to 100 percent, it will benefit the community. It is important that Oceana



will be shut out of your community," he said.

But, he cautioned, there may be more to the situation than meets the eye.

Referring to the joint venture partnership with Premier Fishing, at Saldanha Bay, Mr Dietrich said: "They might not be being completely honest about the reasons they were exiting Hout Bay. Could it be because of that transaction?"

"Oceana is a global company. It has just bought R4.5 billion assets. It wants to become a global player in the fish meal sector. But they have decided to not go offshore."

Mr Jacobs said one of the reasons given for the possible closure was that Oceana's lease was expiring.

Mr Dietrich also questioned this, saying: "All buildings belong to the Department of Public Works, who make them available. Maybe it is a red herring to say the lease will expire. Government will not kick people out of work as a result of a lease."

Mr Dietrich also cautioned that provincial government has plans "to turn the harbours into mini waterfronts where there will be shops, restaurants and leisure" referring to Western Cape Premier Helen Zille's announcement last week about the provincial government's plan to initiate an intergovernmental dispute with national government over the management of 12 small harbours in the province - including Hout Bay Harbour.

"They want to make Hout Bay a white enclave for the elite in Hout Bay. They are not interested in you. You need to put pressure on them. This has already happened in Kalk Bay and Gordon's Bay. I am calling on all of you to stand together. Make sure you win the battle," he said.

Mr Dietrich suggested residents look into why there is no harbour committee in Hout Bay and start a business committee which can take up economic matters for the community.

Mr Mbanjwa also encouraged the community to fight, saying if they let the factory close, they would open the door for other factories to close because residents complain about the smell emitted from them.

"Hout Bay is not the only community that deal with pollution. It is the same at Saldanha and St Helena Bay. There are complaints there too. If people from those areas hear that the complainers have won the battle, it



■ Oceana worker James Wichman signed up to collect signatures for the petition.



■ Cyril Hendricks said Hangberg has been sidelined for too long.

could have the same effect for those factories. Closing the factory is not an option. We must make sure we keep the factory open in Hout Bay."

Meshack Ntshane, Fawu provincial head for administration, described the reason for the possible closure as "a class war".

"We must put the emphasis on the actual struggle. This is a class war and it is driven by the white minority and elite. This factory has been operating since the 1950s and since then people you have been living with that smell. This generation was born out of the embryo of the very same smell. The provincial government want to take away the only means of security. This community is a fishing community. It is the way of life for the community. You must remain (united)."

Peter Warner, an Oceana employee who has been working at the factory since 1975, said he remembers the factory as part of his childhood.

"The smell is bad but management has been trying everything to keep it down. If the factory closes, it will be heartbreaking. There is no way the other factories can accommodate 98 people."

"If I go to St Helena Bay, I will have to pay between R1 500 and R2 000 to rent a place and I will pay R300 to Hout Bay and R300 back."

"I will have to go because I have to work for my family," he said.

Mr Warner said having a waterfront at the harbour will push up his rates.

Hangberg resident Timothy Jacobs said the fishing quotas owned by Oceana, should be distributed in the community, should the factory close.

Advocacy group Fresh Air for Hout Bay (FAHB) said they had never lobbied for the factory to close,

but instead, had fought for the odour and emission to be eliminated.

"First and foremost we would like to clarify that FAHB has never advocated for the closure of the fish meal factory, but rather, we have advocated for the elimination of the smell."

"In its statement, Oceana claims the main reason for the proposed closure is the increase in community complaints, arguing the impact this has had on plant viability. While we appreciate that the community complaints are one factor in this decision, it is unlikely the predominant factor. More likely is that this is a financial decision on the part of Oceana, aiming to consolidate its operations to improve economic efficiencies and viability."

Ike Moritz, from FAHB, said in a press release that he acknowledges Oceana's contribution to the community, but that it does not compare to the profits Oceana has earned in return.

"In its 2014 integrated report, Oceana reported an operating profit of R879.6 million - an 18 percent increase from 2013. Group revenue was up seven percent, 61 percent of which is attributed to canned fish and fishmeal production. Oceana also recently acquired US-based Daybrook Fisheries through a R4.6 billion deal with the express intention of establishing a platform to explore further initiatives globally."

**Secretary's Week Special**

45 Min Full Body Exfoliation  
Express Manicure Pedicure  
Brow Wax / Thread

**FISH ON THE ROCKS**  
Hout Bay  
www.africasfavourite.com

ON DUTY GENERATOR ..... plus

**Evening Special**  
Fish & Chips  
Hake - Friday from 4 to 10pm  
**45.00**  
• All cards accepted •  
info@fishontherocks.com 021-790 0001

**Value Fencing** NO MAINTENANCE  
20 YEAR GUARANTEE  
VIRGIN PVC FENCING

**NO PAINTING...NO RUST!**

**CAPE COUNTRY FEEDS**

SPECIALIST SUPPLIERS OF PET AND ANIMAL FOODS

No 4, Garron Avenue, Tarragona, Hout Bay

**NICKY: 021 791 0889**

**H B D S**  
Hout Bay Dental Studio

Keeping you smiling.  
Call 021 790 2910