

EPA
-
GREAT
SOUTHERN
WASTE

Star Journal

 dandenong.starcommunity.com.au /DandenongJournal @StarJournal_SE

40¢ Inc. GST

**Cupcakes for
heroes on
frontline**

PAGE 5

**Facing up
to Covid**

PAGE 7

**School all
smiles for
'mum run'**

PAGE 15

**Black
Opium's
Crown**

SPORT

SUBSCRIBE to our DIGITAL EDITION - It's **FREE** dandenong.starcommunity.com.au/subscribe

12438490-SG03-20



Burn backlash

By Cam Lucadou-Wells

Greater Dandenong councillors have voted to oppose a VCAT planning permit application for a controversial waste-to-energy incinerator in Dandenong South.

They unanimously rejected a council planning officer's report recommending support for the Great Southern Waste Technologies proposal at the VCAT hearing on 27 July.

In a motion at a 11 May council meeting, Cr Matthew Kirwan said it was the "only responsible decision" given public concerns and that the Environment Protection Authority had not yet assessed the human health and environmental impacts.

"We have heard the legitimate and understandable concerns of residents loud and clear. The Covid-19 situation we are now in has heightened residents putting health first."

The council received 298 community objections and two petitions against the project at 70 Ordish Road. One submission was received in support. Objections include the plant being within 1.5 kilometres from a school and homes, ongoing odour issues, the plant's "old" technology and fire-safety emergency procedures.

The EPA made no objection to the planning application. It is expected to complete its assessment in June.

Cr Tim Dark said it would be "sheer lunacy" for the council to support the plant without obtaining "all the facts". Cr Maria Sampey was "disappointed" that the EPA had not yet addressed councillor and residents' concerns.

On the other hand, Greater Dandenong officers based their support on planning grounds - leaving the matters of environment and health impacts to the EPA's works approval assessment.

"In the view of officers, the combination of the number of submissions, and the grounds of concern provided do not justify establishing a

position of not supporting the application for the upcoming VCAT hearing."

The officers found that the plant's location was in an appropriate industry-2 zone for "offensive" industries - a "hub of waste related industries" and a State Significant Industrial Area.

Nearby were medical and pharmaceutical waste sites, a commercial and industrial waste station, a municipal waste transfer station and recycling resource recovery uses.

"It is considered that the proposal has been designed in an appropriate manner and one which is consistent with its context and will not raise unreasonable adverse planning-related amenity impacts."

The plant proponents Great Southern Waste Technologies is also awaiting works approval from state pollution watchdog, the Environment Protection Authority. After months of delays, the EPA states its assessment will be completed in June. Great Southern Waste Technologies states the plant would annually incinerate 100,000 tonnes of mainly domestic waste otherwise destined for landfill. It would hence reduce greenhouse gases.

Its "clean" gasification technology met European Union standards on emissions, GSWT claims. The plant would feed 7.9 MegaWatts of electricity into the grid, powering about 7000 homes and businesses.

In November, Greater Dandenong Council deferred its decision on the plant until the EPA assessed its impact. An EPA-hosted forum in March reported "great anxiety" due to the plant's proximity to residents, schools, aged care facilities, businesses and Dandenong Creek. In the meantime, Great Southern Waste applied for a planning permit hearing at VCAT due to the council failing to make a decision within the legislated timeframe.

VCAT required Greater Dandenong Council to state its support or opposition to the permit by 5 June.