

Second hearing on plant

By Cam Lucadou-Wells

Greater Dandenong Council will lodge an appeal against the EPA's approval of a proposed waste-to-energy plant in Ordish Road, Dandenong South.

The council announced it will lodge its intentions to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal before the 10 August deadline.

It will be the second VCAT hearing on the controversial project, following a planning permit hearing in July.

In the earlier hearing, the council also opposed the Great Southern Waste Technologies (GSWT) facility.

In a public statement, the council said it

remained "strongly opposed" to the proposal and the EPA's works approval.

"Council is again using its legal representatives and is already undertaking further investigative work and obtaining expert advice in this regard."

Cr Matthew Kirwan said councillors unanimously authorised the appeal's lodgement as a preliminary step.

Queries, including the appeal's cost, would be worked out in coming weeks, he said.

There was also discussion on what technical arguments could be raised against the EPA's assessment.

In his own investigation, Cr Kirwan said he had "serious doubts" on the claimed green-

house gas savings compared to burying waste in landfill.

He said the EPA assessment compared the facility's emissions to landfills where biogas wasn't collected. However, biogas was extracted from most landfills in Melbourne, he said.

The EPA "downplayed" the impact of dioxins emitted by the plant.

A small amount of dioxin was "highly toxic, lasts for years in the environment and accumulates in the food chain".

According to GSWT, the facility would emit dioxins at a level below European Union environmental standards. A spokesperson said the EPA works approval was granted after a "detailed process" and "thorough examination".

"However if Council wishes to raise any issues with the EPA that is a matter for Council."

The plant would process 100,000 tonnes a year of municipal household solid waste, commercial and industrial waste to produce 7.9 MW of electricity to the grid.

Municipal household waste, which would be diverted from landfill, was estimated to make up 80 per cent of the feeder material.

The project has been vigorously opposed by nearby residents, schools and community groups in Keysborough.

Greater Dandenong mayor Jim Memeti recently led a push for the council to lobby for the Dandenong South heavy industry zone to be shifted out of metro Melbourne.