



An illustration of the proposed waste-to-energy plant in Ordish Road, Dandenong South.

Waste-to-energy 'anxiety': forum

By Cam Lucadou-Wells

The proximity of a proposed waste-to-energy plant in Dandenong South is a "cause of great anxiety" to residents, schools, aged care facilities and businesses, the chair of a community forum has stated.

Jennifer Lilburn, of Kismet Forward, reported on the health and environmental objections raised by many of the 95 community members at the EPA section 20 conference in Dandenong on 3 March.

She recommended that the Environment Protection Authority's upcoming works-approval assessment of the 70 Ordish Road facility addresses the concerns.

Ms Lilburn stated she neither agreed or disagreed with the objections but recommended "plain English" EPA assessments on potential emissions, noise, odours and by-product disposal.

An air monitoring plan and a rationale for the "acceptable" 1.5-kilometre buffer from schools and homes was also recommended.

The plant would be 1.4 kilometres from the closest residents and Mt Hira College. Within five kilometres are two primary schools, two

colleges, three kindergartens and a maternal and child health centre.

"The location of the proposed waste to energy facility is a primary focus for many participants," Ms Lilburn stated.

"The proximity to residential areas, schools, aged care facilities and local businesses is a cause of great anxiety."

Despite the proponent's assurances, people feared contamination of Dandenong Creek, groundwater, recycled water supplies and the risk to residents and a plethora of native and migratory birds.

Another "anxiety" was air pollution comprising mercury, sulfur dioxide, carbon dioxide and dioxins, Ms Lilburn stated.

This would be potentially worsened by incorrect sorting of domestic waste fed into the plant, leading to poisonous materials being incinerated.

People were concerned about the unknown cumulative effect of the plant on top of an existing stench from the industrial-2 area, which was causing children to "vomit".

There was "suspicion" about the EPA and proponent Great Southern Waste Technolo-

gies' ability to manage and monitor the impacts, as well as distrust of the plant's technology, Ms Lilburn reported.

"There was also a belief that other countries are moving away from waste to energy and that it is a retrograde step for Australia to consider it when cleaner, more efficient energy generation methods are available."

Where applicable, the EPA should engage the "precautionary principle" if health and environmental impacts were unknown, Ms Lilburn stated.

If the plant was approved, the EPA should ensure complaints and air quality were monitored, and breaches enforced.

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.

Waste plant 'not well understood'

By Cam Lucadou-Wells

A Dandenong South waste-to-energy proponent will submit its interest in a 16-council consortia's tender process for advanced waste solutions in Melbourne's South East.

Great Southern Waste Technologies will propose its controversial site at 70 Ordish Road, which has been overwhelmingly opposed by schools and residents in neighbouring Keysborough.

The consortia's South East Metropolitan Advanced Waste Processing Procurement process is being led by the Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Group. The group includes Greater Dandenong Council.

"I don't think the proposal is understood yet by the local residents," GSWT chief operating officer Bill Keating said of the heated community objections.

"We're not there to cause harm. We're out there to cause benefit in terms of the actual amount of pollution.

"We're not belching out smoke or toxic chemicals - it's illegal to do that. The EPA just won't allow that to happen."

Compared to the waste going to landfill, the plant would be "environmentally positive" and a "better solution".

It would result in less carbon-dioxide emissions and groundwater contamination than dumping waste at the tip.

Mr Keating acknowledged strong community objections to emissions and ground-level concentrations and how they will be measured.

It was wrongly reported that about three per cent of the waste will be emitted as fly-ash, Mr Keating said. It would be captured in a bag filter within the plant, rather than expelled into the atmosphere.

Particulate-matter air emissions would be "near zero", he said.

"We have to be below that 10-parts-per-million (threshold) - and we are."

The tender process isn't expected until later this year, with the impact of Covid-19 an unknown obstruction.

Greater Dandenong is among the 16 councils that are part of the South-East advanced-waste consortia. It delayed a decision on a building works permit for the GSWT proposal.

With the 60-day statutory time limit expired, GWST has lodged for the permit to be heard at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).

GWST is also awaiting approval from Environment Protection Agency Victoria (EPA).

The 1.27-hectare site at Ordish Road is in an industrial 2 zone identified by the State Government as a waste and recovery hub of state importance, the proponent argues.

The plant will process 100,000 tonnes of waste, mainly from households, that would otherwise go to landfill.

It would generate about 7.9 MegaWatts of power into the grid - suffice for about 7000 homes and businesses.

Mr Keating said the technology had been "well proven" in Europe, easily meeting European Union emissions standards.

The plant would employ 30 workers with a further 30 indirect jobs, Mr Keating said.



Great Southern Waste Technologies executive general manager Stuart Gilbert and chief operating officer Bill Keating with the proposed waste-to-energy plant. 207210
Picture: CAM LUCADOU-WELLS