

Minutes

Refuse Disposal Facility Community Reference Group Portfolio Committee – Meeting 56

Date:	27 November 2023	Time:	5:30pm - 7:30pm
Location:	Wyndham Civic Centre, Werribee		
Chairperson:	Bruce Turner		
Attendees:	<p>Independent Chair Bruce Turner Phoenix Facilitation</p> <p>Wyndham City Councillors: Cr Peter Maynard Councillor (Iramoo Ward) Cr Heather Marcus Councillor (Iramoo Ward)</p> <p>Wyndham City Council Staff: Amanda Smith Director City Operations Darren Martin Acting Manager Waste Management and Disposal Chris Rachor RDF Operations Manager Ben Hart RDF Environmental Systems Officer</p> <p>Reference Group members: Connie Menegazzo Adjacent landowner representative David Tsardakis Local Environment Group representative Paul Von Harder Ratepayer/Business/Advocacy Group representative Joe Ferlazzo Community representative Bianca Bragalenti Community representative</p>		
Apologies:	Hayley Scott Community representative Karen Hucker Community representative Ian Domoney Community representative Poly Kiyaga Prospective community representative		

Program

Topic	Actions
<p>1. Welcome, Introductions & Apologies</p> <p>Bruce welcomed everyone to the meeting and initiated a round table of introductions for the present members.</p> <p>Amanda Smith was introduced as the new Director of City Operations within Wyndham City Council and provided a brief overview and introduction of herself for those present.</p>	
<p>2. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest</p> <p>No conflicts of interest were declared.</p>	
<p>3. Adoption of previous minutes</p> <p>The draft minutes from Meeting #55 (on 11 September) were taken as read.</p>	

The Action Tracker was provided at the meeting and brief updates (where possible) were provided.

4. RDF Membership renewal process update

Ben H advised the CRG that two current members (Bianca and Joe) would be coming to the end of their current appointment in September 2024. The CRG was also advised that the appointment process would likely be carried out mid-year so that the new appointments were confirmed for the September 2024 meeting.

While the positions have to be advertised to maintain the renewal cycle outlined in the terms of reference, Bianca and Joe were invited to reapply to retain their positions on the CRG.

Cr. Maynard noted that if the appointment was to be completed by September 2024, then this could be impacted by Council Elections (due to be carried out around October with a caretaker period prior) and that planning would have to allow for this.

5. Format of Operations and Environmental Performance Updates to the CRG

Darren spoke to the group about the current format of the CRG meetings, noting that the CRG Terms of Reference indicates the objective of the group is to address both:

- RDF and its operation and impact to the community; and
- General waste strategy in Wyndham.

In the recent meetings, Darren has noticed that the community concerns into the operation and the impact of the RDF on the community appeared to be of less concern to the CRG as a whole than issues around waste strategy, education and sustainability/circular economy. He also expressed the hope that meetings could involve less 'talking at' and more interaction and involvement of all present.

Darren asked the CRG what topics of interest the group would like to see included in future meetings.

- Joe asked whether the RDF was involved in education, Darren responded that while the RDF was not a focus for education, the Waste Education unit had recently been included in his responsibilities, so education was something that he or relevant officers could speak to in future.

Following Joe's question, there was no immediate feedback. Following the Waste Strategy and Services Report (see next agenda item) the subject was revisited and further member feedback was provided:

- Paul spoke to his advocacy around the circular economy and how he would like to see more discussion on recycling and markets for resulting resource streams.
- Joe asked about recovery rates for recycling, referring to information presented in the Waste Strategy and Services report. He also expressed interest in a tour of external waste processing facilities.
- Connie asked a question around whether bottle tops needed to be removed from plastic bottles prior to recycling them.

Darren addressed these queries, discussing the pros and cons of sorting of wastes at the front end (i.e. individual households) vs. "back-end" (i.e. at the RDF) – the front end providing better 'bang for buck'. He confirmed the approximate recovery rates and the key players (Cleanaway, Polytrade and Veolia), their drivers and differences in acceptable materials for recycling and

some of their processes. He also indicated that the Cleanaway and Veolia websites had some good material about their processes and that Council would provide links to their websites. While not listed in the meeting, these are (for convenience) provided below:

- Cleanaway: <https://www.cleanaway.com.au/recycling-hub/?tab=resources>
 - Click on the “Videos” tab to access a variety of videos related to recycling, noting these are aimed at different levels.
 - Other tabs under the Cleanaway heading provide access to additional areas within the online “Recycling hub”.
- Veolia:
 - Recycling: <https://www.veolia.com/anz/services/recycling-waste-services/recycling>
 - Sorting and Recycling facilities: <https://www.veolia.com/anz/our-facilities/sorting-recycling-facilities>

Darren also responded to Connie’s question, confirming that while the recycling process didn’t require bottle tops to be removed from plastic bottles, it was preferred.

Bruce brought the discussion back to Darren’s initial question around topics of interest and how to make the most of valuable CRG meeting time. It was proposed that the Operations and Environmental reports would be circulated in advance of the meeting (i.e. with the agenda) and that discussion of these would be ‘by exception’, i.e. around questions or issues in the reports of interest to the members.

Further general conversation followed, including the following topics:

- Recycling and materials recovery and emerging ‘hard to treat’ waste streams
- Where Wyndham is in relation to wider waste strategic plans (i.e. other than RDF strategic plan):
 - Darren indicated that there isn’t a specific set of strategies, and this was a bit of a gap.
- Questions around where the CRG could have the most impact or influence, both in a wider sense and as relates to packaging.
 - Darren indicated that for many topics Council had an open mind but, if a topic did not offer real options for consideration, this would be flagged.
 - There was some conversation about how packaging wastes could be managed but that it required wider involvement (i.e. beyond just Wyndham) so was an area for advocacy to other levels of government and/or industry, rather than specific action by Wyndham alone.
 - Cr. Maynard spoke about a visit representatives of Council made to a past Federal minister to discuss changes to packaging laws which had not been successful in addressing concerns.
- How the CRG would receive feedback about ideas put forward to Council:
 - There was discussion around a process and tools to support these ongoing discussions, such as a digital platform (email account/teams page or similar) that could be set up for further feedback/discussion on topics covered in the CRG meetings.
- How contents in recycling bins varies from different municipalities and waste contractors, and some of the drivers associated with this.
- Darren provided feedback to a discussion in a previous meeting, relating to the idea of putting stickers inside bin lids to clearly indicate what wastes could or could not go in each bin. He advised that Sustainability Victoria is developing a list of standard bin contents, and that once this has been finalised a further conversation could be had of the best approaches to education and behaviour change.
- Cr. Marcus spoke to the importance of engaging children and young adults in waste issues.

Action M56-5.1

Look into options for a platform to discuss/receive feedback on CRG ideas.

- Illegal dumping and its patterns, which has been raised in recent meetings.
- Whether the translator feature on the webpage could be moved to the top of the page.

David raised the issue of the intermodal transport facility to be developed in Truganina that will impact grasslands. He said anything that Council can do to enhance and expand these, including revegetation/ landscaping at the RDF, would be welcomed and could provide stewardship to the community with a lasting effect.

Darren indicated that the capping across Cells 1B-3 and Cell 4 would be a substantial area and that further discussion is warranted around the opportunity for it to be a showcase.

David suggested the “tip shop” should be considered in future master planning of the Transfer Station.

During the general discussion, Darren also spoke to Action M55-7.1, relating to works with Deakin and Latrobe Universities around how to treat wastes. Darren indicated that while work was being done, there wasn't anything significant to report on at the moment and will provide a report when there is some significant news to report on.

6. Wyndham Waste Strategy and Waste Services

Darren provided an overview of what Council does in relation to the management of waste within Wyndham, including a summary list of the WCC service mix and recyclable material flows, along with a list of key waste projects being rolled out through Wyndham.

The presentation notes are attached.

Other talking points discussed (but not addressed in the presentation notes) included:

- The Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) collected approximately 1.7 million containers in its first week of operations.
- Waste education materials: As part of a wider review, *Darren requested that members of the CRG review the waste education materials available on the Council website and provide feedback on their quality and their ease of use.*
- Donation Bins: Council is seeking feedback from companies to get a better understanding on the materials (particularly contamination) going into them.

Action M56-6.1
CRG to review waste education materials on Council website.

Following that, Darren asked for feedback from the CRG on the types of materials the CRG would like to see diverted from landfill.

Action M56-6.2
CRG to give feedback on wastes they would like to see diverted from landfill

During the presentation, Joe suggested providing Food Organics/ Green Organics (FOGO) bins to residents for free as a way of getting more organics out of the general waste stream. Darren responded that ultimately a universal FOGO bin (i.e. as a standard service and not an opt-in option) was the solution, and that he hoped Council could work on this with the CRG. Connie expressed concern about people having to pay for a bin they either don't want or need (i.e. those who compost everything). Darren indicated that the service cost was negligible if a universal FOGO system is adopted.

Bruce asked whether the bin lid standardisation work was still underway and Darren confirmed it was. He said that new standalone bins for glass recycling would cost \$8 million to roll out across the municipality so Council was considering alternatives to individual bins. Council was also considering providing 'satellite' transfer stations around the municipality, so that residents didn't just

have the RDF transfer station and would be looking for CRG input on the best locations to encourage their use.

(See **Consolidated list of topics of interest for future meetings** at the end of these minutes for the resultant list of topics from the discussions at this meeting)

7. Member's Report

Connie opened the member's report with a question about Council's plans for the baling facility. Darren responded that this is undergoing a review as part of the wider review of the strategic plan. Council will provide feedback to the CRG next year once the review has been completed.

Action M56-7.1
Council to provide feedback on baling facility when review is complete.

Bianca asked about extra collections over the Christmas period, noting that there was often extra wastes being generated over this period. Darren advised that there were not going to be extra collections but that Council's other services (tip passes, hard rubbish etc) as well as the Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) may be useful and this information should be available on the Council website.

This question prompted some conversation about the CDS. Joe asked:

- Whether Council had any information on the running costs of the CDS collection machines.
 - Darren replied that Council is paid to house the CDS machines, to cover electricity costs, but does not have access to information on the overall running costs.
- Are containers crushed at the drop-off point?
 - Darren answered that they are not crushed within the drop-off units themselves and he wasn't sure if containers crushed on pickup.

Action M56-7.2
Council to see if it is possible to source more information on the CDS machines and collections.

Some further discussion followed about the issues and limitations of the CDS system as it currently stands.

8. RDF Operations and Works update

Chris provided a summary of operations and related works, please find the presentation notes attached. During Chris' update, there was some conversation around how mattresses are managed, including how they are processed, how they are managed overseas and financial wins associated with recovery of the recyclable materials.

Ben provided a summary of environmental and related works, please find the presentation notes attached. During Ben's update:

- Joe asked after progress on virtual flyover tours.
 - Ben advised that drone pilot training is still underway, after which further progress on this is expected. Darren spoke about the concept of the 'waste journey' that could be the theme of a virtual tour.
- Connie asked about the longevity of the tarps to be used in the alternative daily cover trial and how worn out tarps would be disposed of.
 - Ben and Chris noted that longevity was something that would be evaluated in the trial. The tarps from the previous trial had degraded after 6 years, and were no longer usable, in part from wear and tear in a harsh operating environment and in part due to the nature of the materials used. It is not yet clear how they will be disposed of.

8. Meeting Close/ Details of Next Meeting

The meeting closed at 7.30pm.

Next meeting: Proposed for 4.30 to 6.30 pm, 26 February 2024 at the Civic Centre.

Consolidated list of topics of interest for future meetings

- The usefulness of the communications/ education resources available for new (and current) residents on Council's website (see **Action M56-6.1** from this meeting)
- The design and implementation of a universal FOGO system
- The locations of satellite transfer stations
- The RDF Transfer Station Masterplan (including 'tip shop')
- The design and implementation of cell capping/ landscaping at the RDF (including the potential to relate to efforts to enhance and expand adjacent grasslands)
- Processes to recover and treat materials from the waste stream, including 'hard to treat' wastes (and ones that may create challenges in the future, such as EV batteries and solar panels)
- Advocacy to minimize packaging waste
- Illegal dumping of waste