

Minutes

Refuse Disposal Facility Community Reference Group Portfolio Committee – Meeting 57

Date:	26 February 2024	Time:	4:30pm - 6:30pm
Location:	Wyndham Civic Centre, Werribee		
Chairperson:	Bruce Turner		
Attendees:	<p>Independent Chair Bruce Turner Phoenix Facilitation</p> <p>Wyndham City Councillors: Cr Peter Maynard Councilor (Iramoo Ward) Cr Heather Marcus Councilor (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 Karen Hucker Community representative Hayley Scott Community representative Ian Domoney Community representative Poly Kiyaga Prospective community representative</p>		
Guests	Adam Faulkner	LMS Pty Ltd	
	Emma Mountjoy	LMS Pty Ltd	

Apologies:

Program

Topic	Actions
1. Welcome, Introductions & Apologies	
Bruce welcomed everyone to the meeting and initiated a round table of introductions for the guests from LMS.	
2. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest	
No conflicts of interest were declared.	
3. Adoption of previous minutes	
The draft minutes from Meeting #56 (in November 2023) were taken as read.	

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

4. PRESENTATION – Proposed LMS Anaerobic Digester Facility

CRG guests Adam and Emma of LMS Pty Ltd presented information about the proposed Anaerobic Digester project. The proposed facility will comprise sealed vessels that will enhance the breakdown of FOGO wastes, producing biogas with a saleable compost as a byproduct.

The biogas will be piped from the vessels into the existing gas to power plant, while the compost byproduct (digestate) will be sold as a product to farmers, gardeners etc.

The presentation was initially set up as a formal presentation, but evolved to a more conversational format, with CRG questions encouraged by LMS. Through the presentation, CRG members asked a variety of questions (paraphrased below, in no particular order):

David:

- Q: Are there issues if LMS has to flare the biogas off (rather than use it for power generation). What is the end product of flaring?
A: Essentially no issues, with the end product of flaring being carbon dioxide and water vapour.
- Q: How long is the AD process?
A: The material is held within the digestors for 12-18 days and then pasteurized for 3 days.
- Q: Fish and chip paper/pizza boxes are an issue in green waste and can't be recycled, is this an issue for the AD facility?
A: Not a significant issue, no.

Paul

- Q: How will LMS market the digestate?
A: LMS will seek out a variety of markets, including selling it back to Councils, directly to the community and out to market gardens/farm (etc.).

Connie

- Q: Will LMS sell the digestate?
A: Yes – although the product requires some polishing after the AD process.
- Q: Would the farmer markets be broadacre farmers or market gardens?
A: Both, although EPA have some specifications that LMS would need to achieve before it could be sold as a product.
- Q: There needs to be a market for this product.
A: Agreed. LMS couldn't respond in full, but the digestate is expected to be a high quality product which will be saleable. The quality of the digestate is dependent on the inputs and only good quality FOGO will be used. The digestate will be tested prior to sale.
- Q: Will the product being stored outside, in the open?
A: That is one option. If pursuing this option, then further studies will be carried out to ensure the facility doesn't impact on the neighbouring properties (e.g. dust, odour, noise etc.).
- Q: What LMS expect in terms of odour being produced by the facility.
A: There are expected to be minimal odour associated with the facility, not enough to impact neighbouring properties. There will be independent studies done to assess the potential for impact.
- Q: Will the facility be a 24 hour day operation?
A: The facility's operation will align with the landfill operations. LMS are aiming to take about 8000 tonnes (2-3 trucks per day).

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- Q: Will the facility be located at the front of the RDF?
A: No, it will be located near the existing LMS facility, away from the site's licensed boundaries.

Joe

- Q: How will the incoming material be sorted to remove contaminants?
A: There will be a variety of measures. A trommel will be used to separate heavier material and a screen (or screens) will be used to remove finer materials. If there is a lot of contamination, then a picking station might also be considered.
- Q: Joe indicated that he'd heard that methane at concentrations of around 300-400ppm smells worse than formaldehyde and asked whether that was true?
A: That is not correct [NB: Methane is an odourless gas]
- Q: Why are 8 smaller digesters proposed instead of 1 larger unit?
A: There are several reasons. It keeps costs down but also adds flexibility, allowing LMS to add/remove modules to suit demand.
- Q: Is there a detailed process flow chart for the anaerobic digester?
A: Information on the proposal was supposed to go live today, but LMS' representatives were unsure if the process flow chart was included. If it's not, then Emma can put this information up.

Karen

- Q: In the second stage of the process (i.e. once removed from the vessels) does the digestate just sit outside or is there a mechanical process?
A: There are no moving parts to the actual process outside the containers. Once outside the organics are stable – no further composting is taking place. There are some outside processes (moisture conditioning, loader movements etc.) but these support operations and are not related to the AD process itself.

Cr. Maynard

- Q: Aren't there other facilities (e.g. Veolia Dandenong) that have a similar system, or are LMS doing that plus the biogas collection?
A: No, other facilities have a different process.

Bianca

- Q: Is packaging (or other rubbish) an issue?
A: The process can handle some of the compostable packaging materials, but other materials (e.g. plastics) will need to be removed.
- Q: What percentages of waste materials can be managed by the process?
A: LMS was unable to answer that question.
- Q: Is there a monetary benefit to Council (e.g. from carbon credits)?
A: Yes, there are royalties LMS pay to Council from the sale of electricity to the electrical grid.

Cr. Marcus

- Q: What percentage of green waste can be used, given contaminants (etc.) that might present in the source material.
A: Around 96% recovery of green waste materials is possible.

Ian

- Q: Green waste collection is currently opt-in. If the green waste service was cheaper, would LMS expect to see more material?
A: LMS deferred this question to Council. Darren responded that Council is working towards a universal green waste service.

Hayley

- Q: How is the process safe and efficient? Is there transport involved?

A: The whole system is net energy positive. Biogas is pumped via pipeline to the gas-to-power facility, so there are no solid materials to be physically transferred between the locations. The digestate byproduct will be sold to off-site markets as much as possible.

During the conversation, Darren noted that it is important for Council to be certain that the proposed facility (or any failure of the proposed facility) will not impact landfill operations, our neighbours or regulations. It is important for the community to be onboard with this project.

Emma concluded the presentation by noting that LMS would like to continue to engage with the CRG to receive advice on how to best engage the wider community. Bruce suggested that another meeting might be useful to brainstorm ideas on how to promote the proposal to the wider community.

5. Wyndham Waste Strategy and Waste Services

Feedback on existing educational materials on Council website.

Not all CRG members had reviewed the existing educational materials on Council's website relating to waste and waste services in Wyndham, although enough had to start a preliminary discussion. Darren requested that all members review the existing comments and provide feedback to discuss in the next CRG meeting.

Joe noted that the exercise assumes that everyone in Wyndham has access to a computer or smartphone when this may not be the case. Darren responded that the first step was to get the website into the condition where it useful to most of the wider community, then look at alternative ways to get the information to those members of the community without regular internet access.

Joe also enquired after a previous suggestion around making translation of Council documents on the website easier. Darren responded that he understood the project had started but would need to check in with the communications team to understand its status.

After some discussion around new Wyndham residents not being aware of what waste services are available and around new welcome packs being developed, Bruce reiterated that the focus of the present discussion was around the means of communicating the information on the website. From there the discussion turned to:

- The information needs to be straightforward and direct – research shows there is only a brief window of time to catch and hold a person's attention.
- Information is present (specifically the Zero Waste map, which was endorsed as being helpful for information on what to do with your wastes) but it's not prominent, so few would know it exists.
- People need to be able to easily navigate through the website using links. The links themselves should be clear and distinct. The ones on the website are small and grey – which may be difficult for the visually impaired.
- Symbols on maps need to be clear and distinct. On one of the maps, the services shown are all the same colour and it's hard to use.
- Have a banner (or other device) right at the top of the page showing current and/or important information to pass onto the community (regarding waste).

During this conversation Bruce went over the scope of the task. After a question about what the CRG members were supposed to be looking at, Darren explained

Action M57-5.1

CRG to review materials on website.

Provide feedback to

Ben to consolidate for the next meeting.

that there are three levels of information users – topic champions, everyday users and people who are not interested.

The current goal of the website is primarily to engage with the first two groups.

Conversation returned to other avenues to disseminate waste services information that were not specific to the Council website, including:

- New immigrant packs presented during citizenship ceremonies.
- Engaging with community members who speak languages other than English to translate some of the online documents – as the availability of materials and information in other languages is a limiting factor. This might extend to presenting some of this information as videos (rather than text) to show new immigrants how to use some of the available services.
- Educating students on better waste management practices and using this as a vector to get better practices into the wider Wyndham community.
- Getting engagement officers to work with social media to get waste service information up on Council's social media – which might be more accessible to some segments of the community.
- Using other non-written forms of communications, such as presentations in shopping centre (as one example).

David raised the idea of separating waste services information away from Council's website, noting there is a lack of trust in the community, meaning the Wyndham logo could be off-putting for some. He suggested that a separate website with this information or linking this information in with a community group might be another, more appealing, option.

Darren noted that the communications team had a lot of metrics to get a better idea of what people were looking at on the website and there were some school incursion projects, but that these needed to improve.

It was recommended that the CRG as a whole take another look at the information on Council's website and send it feedback to Ben, who would consolidate the information ahead of the next CRG meeting.

Feedback on wastes to be diverted from landfill

Paul commenced this discussion by noting that this topic is complex and constantly evolving. He suggested that there were some elements that (if Council planned to do more than landfill and resource recovery) it might be valuable to have the CRG form sub-groups around to consider further.

The conversation turned to the feasibility of satellite transfer stations. Darren asked CRG members to think about where these might be best located and to specifically consider:

- How long would you consider driving to dispose of something?
- What are the materials you'd be most likely to drive to dispose of?
- Would you simply piggyback satellite transfer stations to CDS depots, or other existing facilities?

Bruce suggested providing this feedback to Ben to consolidate for the next CRG meeting.

Cr. Maynard noted that because the CDS was being widely adopted and was successfully drawing people in, these might also be good places to put up information about waste services in Wyndham (in multiple languages).

Action M57-5.2

CRG to consider locations of satellite transfer stations and what materials might be accepted.

6. Members Report

Bruce indicated that member input to the previous items had taken the time allocated to the broader member report. He sought only urgent or otherwise important matters at this point.

Karen asked about the completion of the bin lid standardisation program. Darren answered that the bulk of the work (90%) has been completed, although Cleanaway reports some areas where old bin lids remain. These will be progressively replaced over the next 6 months or so (e.g. where residents don't proactively contact Council to have the bin lids replaced).

There will be some targeted campaigns in some areas.

Paul asked whether the baling facility was still going ahead. Darren responded that a business case has been brought to Council and a discussion is to be made on the next steps (e.g. with consideration of the recent strategic review). He planned to report to the next CRG meeting on the outcome of this process.

7. RDF Operations and Works update

Further to the information provided in the Operations and Environment reports (provided via email ahead of the meeting), Ben provided further information relating to a windblown litter incident on 13 February 2024.

Bruce asked some questions around environmental monitoring and the leachate disposal panel which Ben responded to.

8. Topics for discussion in 2024

Further to the consolidated list of potential discussion points in the Meeting #56 minutes, Hayley suggested that there could be some presentation by on-campus sustainability groups at universities as these have some programs that have positively impacted on how on-campus wastes are managed. She offered to follow-up with relevant people at the University of Melbourne.

Darren indicated that getting a presentation on this would be good and could be something potentially done at the August 2024 meeting.

Karen suggested it would be good to understand how some of the on-campus practices could be translated to something that can be implemented in the broader community.

8. Other/Meeting Close/ Details of Next Meeting

- David noted Nature West was hosting a Clean Up Australia Day event on Sunday March 3, 2024.
- Site tour: Paul, David, Bianca, Hayley and Poly all indicated interest in a site tour.

The meeting closed at 6.30pm.

Next meeting: Proposed for 4.30 to 6.30 pm, 27 May 2024 at the Civic Centre.