

# Minutes

## Refuse Disposal Facility Community Reference Group Portfolio Committee – Meeting 58

<b>Date:</b>	26 May 2024	<b>Time:</b>	4:30pm - 6:30pm
<b>Location:</b>	Wyndham Civic Centre, Werribee		
<b>Chairperson:</b>	Bruce Turner		
<b>Attendees:</b>	<p><b>Independent Chair</b> Bruce Turner Phoenix Facilitation</p> <p><b>Wyndham City Councillors:</b> Cr Peter Maynard Councilor (Iramoo Ward) Cr Heather Marcus Councilor (Iramoo Ward)</p> <p><b>Wyndham City Council Staff:</b> Amanda Smith Director City Operations Darren Martin Manager Waste Management and Disposal Chris Rachor RDF Operations Manager Ben Hart RDF Environmental Systems Officer</p> <p><b>Reference Group members:</b> David Tsardakis Local Environment Group representative Paul Von Harder Ratepayer/Business/Advocacy Group representative Joe Ferlazzo Community representative Karen Hucker Community representative Ian Domoney Community representative</p>		
<b>Guests</b>	Adam Faulkner Jarrod Tagliaferri	LMS Pty Ltd (via MS Teams; for Item 4) LMS Pty Ltd	
<b>Apologies:</b>	Connie Menegazzo Bianca Bragalenti Hayley Scott Poly Kiyaga Emma Mountjoy	Adjacent landowner representative Community representative Community representative Prospective community representative LMS Pty Ltd	

## Program

Topic	Actions
<b>1. Welcome, Introductions &amp; Apologies</b>	
	Bruce welcomed everyone to the meeting and acknowledged the apologies.
<b>2. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest</b>	
	No conflicts of interest were declared.
<b>3. Adoption of previous minutes</b>	
	The draft minutes from Meeting #57 (in February 2024) were taken as read. It was agreed that the draft minutes from the present meeting would be circulated within two weeks.

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The Action Tracker was provided at the meeting and brief updates (where possible) were provided, or it was noted at which agenda items specific items would be discussed.

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#### 4. PRESENTATION – Proposed LMS Anaerobic Digester Facility

Jarrold and Adam from LMS Pty Ltd provided an update on 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 update presented by LMS is included with these minutes and covered:

- A recap of the proposed facility.
- Key updates on the progress of the proposal since CRG Meeting #57.
- An outline of LMS' proposed engagement strategy.
- Summary of next steps and a request for feedback from the CRG.

After the presentation, there was a discussion that focussed primarily on the scope of the community engagement program and on how much influence the community would have in the development of the proposed facility. LMS noted that while much of the technical aspects of the project were controlled by engineering constraints, the purpose of the community engagement is to be open about how the facility will operate, its anticipated benefits and to identify any concerns or risks that the community might have. That way:

- Any community issues or concerns about the facility and its operations can be reviewed and addressed in the planning stages of the project; and
- The community can be encouraged to play a key part in a circular economy 'story' that's happening in their own area, with the project producing both electricity and compost from their FOGO wastes. (It was suggested that targeting children at schools could be one way of highlighting this story).

Several questions were asked around the green waste service in Wyndham and how this might affect the proposed facility and this evolved into a discussion around how green wastes were managed. This covered a range of subjects including the potential rollout of a universal FOGO collection service within Wyndham, how the cost of the additional green bin might be charged to ratepayers and how to improve organics separation.

Several questions were interspersed that were unrelated to the broader discussions outlined above. These included questions around:

- Why LMS selected a dry digester process when there are many successful wet digester and micro-digestors? LMS responded that there were several factors that made a dry digester process desirable, including:
  - Minimising the amount of leachate generated.
  - Higher tolerance to contamination (rubbish etc) in the FOGO feedstock.
  - Improved scalability, which will allow LMS to ramp operations up or down to suit operational demand.
- Whether there were risks associated with aerosols/dust that might be generated by the proposed facility? LMS responded that they are looking into what studies will be needed to support their EPA permit application and these would include studies such impacts from aerosols/dust.
- Could a physical model of the proposed facility be made, to assist the community in visualising the facility? LMS responded that it was a good idea and could be considered, but that they were also generating digital models for similar reasons. LMS also noted there is a test plant being established in Adelaide which will physically demonstrate what the plant will be like.
- Is there a market for the compost product? LMS explained that this was being looked at as part of developing the proposal. Darren said an aim was to reuse waste as a resource locally where possible. David suggested

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providing some of the product to local community/ environment groups would be helpful.

- If used cat litter was a general waste (i.e. for the red bin) or whether it should be put into the green bin? Feedback from Darren was that it should be put in the general waste bin.

The next steps with the project include the SA trial and preparation of the community consultation plan. A report back on these is planned for the next CRG meeting (in August).

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## 5. Wyndham Waste Strategy and Waste Services

### Independent review of the 2019-2025 RDF Strategic Plan

Darren introduced the topic, noting that as several CRG members were absent only an overview would be provided. The full report will be provided in Meeting #59 (August 2024).

The overview covered:

- The scope of the independent third-party review of the 2019 – 2025 RDF Strategic Plan (the “Strategic Plan”) and some of its key findings; and
- Some of the implications on projects proposed in the Strategic Plan.

Darren noted that the independent review found that market conditions had significantly changed since the publication of the Strategic Plan. This change means that:

- The goal to transition the RDF towards a resource and energy recovery facility (i.e. diverting 90% of waste away from landfill by 2040) is not currently viable, as the market is not positioned to support this. Work towards this goal is on pause until end markets have matured.
- The proposed baling facility is currently on hold but will be revisited once the market conditions have improved.

Consequently, the RDF has shifted focus to operating a best practice landfill facility. To demonstrate some of the activities being carried out to achieve this, a short time-lapse video showing the construction of the Cell 4 landfill cap was presented to the CRG. Darren described the intent and various stages of the work. He indicated that Council would speak to David about what species might be considered for planting on the finished cap.

Cr. Marcus suggested that it would be good put this video on Council’s Facebook page. Joe noted the importance of getting information like this out to the community, as most people don’t understand that landfilling is more than just tipping rubbish into a hole in the ground.

Darren returned to the Strategic Plan review overview, providing an update into what the RDF is currently doing and where future opportunities are, presenting a slide with current resource recovery programs and activities. The lack of appropriate market conditions means Council is pausing some of the bigger resource recovery projects – however the commitment to reducing waste to landfill remains and Council is looking at how to best utilise opportunities that exist outside of market constraints (i.e. removing 35% of food organics in general waste bins).

Some questions by the CRG followed, including:

- If a cost analysis had been done to show the advantage of providing free green waste bins to residents. Darren replied Council was reviewing this as part of a potential universal FOGO service. One possibility is (if a universal

**Action M58-5.1**  
Council to investigate putting the Cell 4 timelapse video onto Council’s Facebook page.

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FOGO service were to go ahead) the costs of the bins may be incorporated into the waste rates (rather than being an additional cost).

- What broader strategies were being implemented to reduce rubbish. Darren replied most waste these days tends to be packaging. From the back end of the packaging chain, it is hard for the RDF or Council to influence this directly. Most work is being done at the Federal level or from industry-led organisations (i.e. the National Packaging Covenant). However, Council is working with the State Government to do what it can.
- Whether screening or shredding waste had been looked at. Darren and Chris responded to this question, noting:
  - While shredding waste reduces the volume of waste, it doesn't reduce the mass. The mass drives most transactions.
  - A shredding trial was recently carried out at the RDF, using a contractor who knew the process and was using their own system. The trial was unsuccessful for several reasons.
  - Sorting sheds have the same problem as some of the larger resource recovery initiatives being considered – once the materials are separated, the end markets largely are just not there yet.

Cr Marcus noted that while good work had gone into stopping the use of single use shopping bags, she had observed that people were generally not using reusable bags. Instead, people seemed to be using paper bags instead. Cr. Marcus also spoke to concerns around large bins on Main Street taking primarily only food wastes and some associated concerns and potential opportunities.

Bruce concluded the conversation, noting that this presentation addressed outstanding action M54-6.4. Action M57-7.1 was also addressed.

### **Feedback on Council Website (Action M57-5.1)**

Ben summarized the feedback provided by three members of the CRG prior to the meeting:

- Two members had no real concerns with the website; and
- One member identified some issues with the layout, banners and consistency in language/messaging that could be addressed to improve the overall experience in finding and using the website.

The conversation was opened to the CRG, where a general conversation took place covering the purpose for the review and some items to consider, such as what would prevent people from improving their own waste management practices. Darren raised the idea of whether a short (i.e. 30 second) video/animation on Council's website (or social media accounts) might be a way to influence people to stop putting food in the red bin.

This gained some approval, depending on how the video was released. But a concern was raised about how this might not affect people who are unwilling to modify their behaviour when it comes to disposing of waste. David suggested linking reduced spending in the wider community to revenue lost to Council from the increased cost burden of processing wastes that should not be in the waste stream in the first place.

The discussion started to cover some of the reasons why people might avoid adopting better waste management practices before focusing particularly on green waste and how some information could be provided to educate people on how to minimise decaying food waste odour in green waste bins, as this is not necessarily easy and needs some knowledge to achieve. Chris also highlighted that even compostable bags create problems in the composting process, requiring them to be removed as part of the waste processing.

### **Action M58-5.2**

Council to evaluate feedback and pass onto website team.

### **Action M58-5.3**

Council to contact PR team to evaluate the potential for short "how to" animations

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### **Feedback on Satellite transfer stations (Action M57-5.2)**

Darren provided a recap of the overall satellite transfer station concept, with subsequent conversation including a general discussion on the types of waste that satellite transfer stations might take (e-waste, metal, and batteries were particularly mentioned) and possible locations (places where people go, such as supermarkets as per the discontinued soft plastics collection service), experiences with similar international facilities and the need for the community to take responsibility for separating wastes at home.

The conversation turned to current waste separation practices at the RDF Transfer Station and the costing structure for comingled wastes. At the moment, it is not possible for people to pre-sort loads into recyclables and only pay for the residual waste portion. It was noted that where people have the time to run multiple loads, it is possible to:

- Dispose of sorted loads of recyclable material (i.e. e-waste, glass bottles, cardboard etc) which are free of charge.
- Then dispose of residual waste for a fee.

Darren then noted that satellite transfer stations would be a good opportunity for time poor people to dispose of small amounts of sorted recyclable materials, meaning that they would only need to come to the transfer station occasionally to drop comingled loads. This would have the advantage of reducing the need to stockpile waste materials in residential homes.

David mentioned that the best chance to change behaviours would be to highlight how satellite transfer stations benefit people, both at an individual and community/ environmental level. He suggested giving people tokens for dropping off recyclables, somewhat like the container deposit scheme (see next topic).

### **Feedback on Container Deposit Scheme information (Action M56-7.2)**

Darren reported that Council had not (yet) been able to get Wyndham specific data or statistics from the Container Deposit Scheme. These have been asked for but have not been provided. \$50 million has been paid out so far across Victoria. Karen pointed out that this was one area that Wyndham doesn't necessarily have to 'win' in, because it is possible that people may be encouraged to avoid getting certain containers in the first place.

Brief conversation commenced regarding tokens from the CDS being limited to specific brands/places to redeem and the feasibility of a waste separation reward system within Wyndham. Darren mentioned that this could be a good idea, but the tokens might be better going towards discounting the waste charge (or similar) instead of a direct payment.

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## **6. Members Report**

Joe reported that:

- The Repair Café was waiting on feedback about a small Council grant that had been applied for previously but rejected. This is to cover costs that Joe is currently personally incurring to keep the café going.
- He was also applying for a (third party) grant to set up a plastic recycling education program. This will aim to teach up to 600 kids a year about plastic recycling and provide a hands-on educational experience with a shredder, extruder and moulds whereby kids can make something new from plastics they have collected ("cradle to cradle" process)
- Approximately 240 pairs of new sports shoes had been rescued from being shredded and going to landfill and would be donated to aboriginal communities and prison inmates, along with rescued new sports balls.

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Heather reported that her initiatives to educate against fast fashion were progressing well, with several new schools coming on board to start programs about recycling in the fashion industry.

David reported back on NatureWest's Clean Up Australia event, which attracted over 200 volunteers, many from the CALD community, and collected more than 600kg of assorted waste materials.

Bruce raised action M56-5.1, which was to look at options for an online platform to allow the CRG members to discuss waste issues and provide feedback on ideas outside the quarterly meetings.

Ben reported that Council's IT team suggest MS Teams would be a good starting point, as it is a widely accepted and flexible platform that would allow a wide range of options for collaboration outside of the CRG quarterly meetings.

Ben asked the CRG what they would like in terms of functionality and, after a brief discussion, Ben said that he'd put together an initial framework in the Meeting #58 minutes for CRG review and feedback (see below). After allowing a couple of weeks for CRG feedback, Ben will request Council's IT team to start preparing the online forum.

**Action M58-6.1**  
CRG to provide feedback on initial forum framework.

Based on conversations during Meeting #58 and on further thought after Meeting #58, the following initial framework for the online CRG forum is proposed:

1. A space for sharing general, administrative CRG information
  - This space could also be used for Council to advise the whole CRG on issues (if required) outside the quarterly meetings.
2. A space for sharing information and ideas regarding operations or facilities at the RDF.
  - An example of this might be when the RDF needs to seek specific EPA permissions (e.g. alternative daily cover trial).
3. A space for sharing and discussing technical waste management information or ideas (i.e. articles or ideas around waste strategy or resource recovery/recycling initiatives).
4. A space for sharing and discussing waste education information or ideas

This completes Action M56-5.1.

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## 7. RDF Operations and Works update

Chris provided a summary of the information provided in the Operations Report, emailed to CRG members prior to Meeting #58.

- There was a short conversation after the Operation Report summary, around why residual waste volumes from the transfer station had reduced.

Ben provided a summary of the information provided in the Environmental Report, emailed to CRG members prior to Meeting #58.

- There was a short conversation after the Environmental Report summary, around whether the leachate treatment system would use a biological/wetlands treatment system.

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## 8. Other/Meeting Close/ Details of Next Meeting

Bruce advised that he would be stepping back from his position of independent chairperson of the CRG after the August 2024 meeting.

The meeting closed at 6.30pm.

**Next meeting:** 4.30 to 6.30 pm, 26 August 2024 at the Civic Centre.

Proposed discussion points:

- Strategic Plan Review full report – Darren Martin (RDF)
  - Resource Recovery Operations – Bill Corcoran (RDF)
  - Melbourne University sustainability initiatives and how these might be implemented in the broader community (Melbourne University, subject to follow-up by Hayley Scott)
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