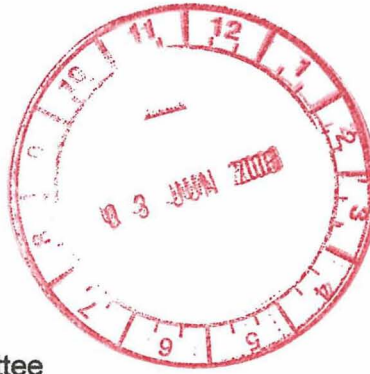


WST/3-01  
D/08/2516

29 May 2008

The Hon Sheila Mills MLC  
Chair  
Environment and Public Affairs Committee  
Legislative Council  
Parliament House  
Perth WA 6000



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**Petition No 59 – Regarding Regional Resource Recovery Centre –  
Canning Vale**

Dear Ms Mills

The Mindarie Regional Council (MRC) welcomes an opportunity to contribute to your review of Petition 59, and to comment on the broader issue of the value and significance of Resource Recovery to the community and the environment.

The MRC is the State's largest waste management authority, comprising the Cities of Joondalup, Perth, Stirling and Wanneroo; and the Towns of Cambridge, Victoria Park and Vincent.

The MRC is responsible for the management and disposal of some 350,000 tonnes of waste generated each year by about 500,000 people living in the region. Most of that volume of waste is disposed to landfill at Tamala Park, where some 4 million tonnes of waste have been buried since operations began in 1991.

Some seven years ago, and in direct response to the Government's vision of Zero Waste 2020, the MRC embarked on an extensive investigation into the merits, costs and feasibility of establishing the first Resource Recovery Facility (RRF) in its region.

From the outset, the Council determined that its preferred model was to assign the building, owning and operating of the RRF to an experienced practitioner in the industry, and subsequently sought expressions of interest, and eventually identified and appointed such an organisation from within the private sector.

BioVision 2020 Pty Ltd, a consortium comprising as its principal shareholders SITA Environmental Solutions Pty Ltd and Westscheme Superannuation Fund, will build, own and operate the plant for 20 years on land acquired by the MRC in Pederick Road, Neerabup.

Construction of such a facility is now underway, and the plant is expected to commence operations in mid-2009.

Once operational, this first-stage facility will convert about 70,000 tonnes of household waste each year into market-quality compost, thereby reducing the volume of waste sent

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to landfill by some 20% a year. Proposed future stages of the RRF are expected to eventually divert an additional 50% of waste from landfill.

Development of the RRF to this stage has proven to be an extensive, complex, time-consuming resource-intensive and expensive undertaking, but it is also one that has won the continuing support of all the duly-elected Local Government representatives who have sat as members of the MRC during the seven-year gestation of this project.

Integral to the project's success to date (and a not-unsubstantial element of the costs) has been the extensive community engagement activities the Council agreed to undertake.

Consequent to feedback received as a result of these extensive community engagement activities, and as evidence of its willingness to listen to the community, the MRC Council determined that:

- the facility should be located in the Neerabup precinct;
- thermal technologies ought not be considered for the first-stage plant's waste treatment process;
- the views of the community should be formally recognised on a continuing basis through the establishment of an independent and representative Community Engagement Advisory Group; and
- the contract documentation signed with the successful tenderer (BioVision 2020 Pty Ltd) should reflect the 20 specific objectives and 66 associated outcomes the community deemed necessary for the project to win broad community support, as identified in the development of a unique document, the Community Partnership Agreement.

We make no comment in relation to the specific content of Petition 59. We are not in a position to do so.

However, we submit that Resource Recovery, as a waste management alternative to landfilling, is integral to the challenge of enhancing environmental sustainability in this State through the benefits it offers in reducing greenhouse gas emissions; in delaying the inevitability of developing more landfills to service the population in the Perth metropolitan area; and, through extensive community education strategies, in informing, encouraging and supporting individuals to become more mindful about being less wasteful and to reduce, reuse and recycle more of the products they consume.

Indeed, all of Perth's Regional Councils are currently progressing alternative waste treatment strategies in response to State Government policies, and to changing community attitudes toward waste management practices.

Yours faithfully

  
Kevin F Poynton  
Chief Executive

kp/kc

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