FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Is the process proposed for the EMRC compatible with the accepted principles of a sustainable waste management system, being the Waste Hierarchy and the Circular Economy?

Yes, the process is compatible with these principles. A circular economy is one in which the value of products, materials and resources is maintained for as long as possible, minimising waste and resource use. The waste hierarchy requires different processes for waste prevention and management to be prioritised with the objectives of minimising adverse environmental effects and optimising resource efficiency. It aims to increase waste prevention, reuse and recycling, and recognises that waste combustion with a high level of energy recovery is preferable to landfilling.

The proposed energy from waste facility that will treat the EMRC residue waste will comply with Best Available Technology standards in terms of energy recovery and environmental impacts. The EMRC and its member councils are required to provide only residue waste that would otherwise go to landfill. The contract accommodates the future introduction of improved resource separation, recycling and recovery of materials from the waste stream without penalty.

2. What was EMRC's evaluation process? How did EMRC get to this point?

The call for tenders was released in August 2016 and closed on 18 January 2017. Since that time an extensive tender evaluation process has been undertaken which included compliance assessments, financial modelling, reference facility inspections and a detailed scoring process. Tenderers were required to develop a community waste education plan and to address the goals developed in the EMRC's Community Partnership Agreement and were assessed against their responses.

Detailed evaluation reports were prepared and reviewed by a steering committee, which recommended the preferred tenderer to Council.

The tender evaluation panel included representatives from each Member Council, with input from EMRC staff with specific expertise and with specialist consulting including technical, probity and legal input.

3. How does the proposed RRF solution contribute to the State Waste Strategy?

All complying tenders were assessed against achieving the waste diversion policy targets adopted by the Waste Authority. The preferred tenderer solution will make a significant contribution towards the waste diversion target for municipal solid waste.

4. How has EMRC ended up with an energy from waste (combustion) solution?

The tender process adopted a broad scope to ensure that all viable options for the development of the facility were able to be considered through the evaluation process. The EMRC was willing to consider tenders across options including:

- Ownership model: DBOM (Design Build Operate and Maintain), or WSA (Waste Supply Agreement)
- Location of the facility: Red Hill Waste Management Facility or elsewhere
- Technology: Anaerobic Digestion (AD), or energy from waste including Gasification or Combustion

The evaluation was undertaken on all compliant tenders received, and the energy from waste (combustion) solution was determined through the evaluation process to be the best resource recovery option for the region. Red Hill Waste Management Facility has environmental approvals for AD or gasification.

5. Why has the EMRC decided to adopt an energy from waste solution when use of this technology is being questioned in some parts of the world?

The use of combustion type energy from waste technologies is being questioned where there is an oversupply of capacity of these facilities, such as in some parts of Europe. This has lead to commercial pressure to supply feed stock to these facilities which can negatively impact efforts to increase waste prevention, reuse and recycling. There are currently no energy from waste facilities in Australia processing mixed household waste. Therefore such commercial pressures do not exist.

The facilities that are currently planned for Perth will be fully utilised processing residue waste that would otherwise go to landfill, even with vastly improved waste prevention, reuse and recycling. Also, the EMRC will not be obliged to supply materials to the energy from waste facility that are recovered from the waste stream through future improved resource separation, recycling and recovery.

6. Will the facility pose a danger to human or environmental health?

No. The Environmental Protection Authority and the Waste Authority commissioned a comprehensive investigation into the environmental and health impacts of energy from waste technologies in 2013. The EPA and Waste Authority found that, subject to compliance with the following six key principles, energy from waste facilities that employ best practice can be operated with acceptable impacts to our community.

- Only proven technology components should be accepted for commercially operating waste to energy plants.
- The expected waste input should be the main consideration for the technology and processes selected.
- Proposals must demonstrate best practice that, at a minimum, meets the European Unions' Waste Incineration Directive standards for emissions at all times.
- The waste sourced as input must target genuine residual waste that cannot feasibly be reused or recycled.
- Continuous emissions monitoring must occur where feasible, and noncontinuous emissions monitoring must be required for all other emissions of concern.
- Residual by-products must be properly treated and disposed of to an appropriate landfill, except where it is demonstrated that they can be safely used elsewhere with acceptable impacts to the environment or human health.

The proposed facility complies with the six key principles.

7. Why has EMRC decided on a WSA instead of a DBOM model?

The tender process adopted a broad scope to ensure that all viable options for the development of this facility were considered through this tender process. The EMRC was willing to consider tenders across options including:

- Ownership model: DBOM (Design Build Operate and Maintain), or WSA (Waste Supply Agreement).
- Location of the facility: Red Hill Waste Management Facility or elsewhere.
- Technology: Anaerobic Digestion, or energy from waste including Gasification or Combustion.

The evaluation was undertaken on all compliant tenders received, and the WSA management model was determined by the evaluation process to be the best contract model for the region.

8. Will EMRC at any stage have to "import rubbish" to meet its contractual obligations?

No. The contract allows for future recycling initiatives without penalty or having to supply specific quantities of waste.

9. What is the benefit of a Waste Supply Agreement (WSA) to the member Councils?

A WSA contract means that the financial risk is removed from the participating member Councils and there is a potential cost benefit because the facility will enable the contractor to secure waste tonnages from other sources and therefore achieve better economies of scale than if treating EMRC waste alone.

10. Is this contract a disincentive to recycling?

No. The evidence from overseas is that energy from waste facilities encourage recycling. This facility is only processing waste after residents have reduced, reused and recycled waste material. The EMRC has an integrated waste management strategy for the future and is implementing this strategy at its Hazelmere Resource Recovery Park with the recycling of waste timber, sorting of commercial and industrial waste and the generation of renewable energy in a wood waste to energy plant.

At its best practice Red Hill Waste Management Facility, the EMRC also composts greenwaste to meet Australian Standards, collects Household Hazardous Waste for recycling, supports the Drum Muster collection program for farm chemical containers, runs an award winning dry cell battery and CFL collection program in schools and public places, participates in the Paintback scheme and the e-waste recycling scheme (both national product stewardship schemes).

The EMRC has an active waste education program that encourages households to separate waste. Based on the waste hierarchy, the education campaign encourages people to avoid, reduce, reuse, recycle and recover waste to cut down the volume of waste that ends up in the general waste bin. This message is not changing. It is still important to remove re-usable and recoverable materials from the waste stream because those materials have a value. Whatever remains in the general waste bin when it is collected each week will go to the HZI facility to be used to generate power, heat and, potentially, recyclable road base.

11. What have you done to find out the community's views on this project?

The EMRC has actively engaged with the community about the RRF project since 2003, using a variety of methods including attitudinal surveys, public information sessions and workshops. The purpose of the engagement since the beginning of the project has been to keep the community informed about the project and to invite community input on any aspects where there was an opportunity for community comment to influence project design and project decisions.

Since project commencement, the EMRC has utilized the Waste Management Community Reference Group (WMCRG) for community input about development of the wider community engagement process for the resource recovery project. In 2010, a Community Task Force (CTF) was established with members drawn from across the region. Their job was to develop a Community Partnership Agreement (CPA) which reflected community expectations about the proposed resource recovery facility to be included in the future tender, construction and operation of the facility.

Based on the information discovered as a result of overseas reference facility site inspections during the tender evaluation process, similar approaches to community consultation had resulted in very high levels of community support for the facility once completed and operational.

All feedback obtained through EMRC's extensive public consultation process has informed the project and was considered in the tender evaluation process using the Community Partnership Agreement objectives.

A full summary of the community engagement undertaken is available on the website at http://www.emrc.org.au/community-engagement-resource.html.

26 September 2017