

RESOURCE RECOVERY FACILITY (RRF) SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT 2003 TO 2016

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.

Throughout the project, the EMRC has been guided by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) values and guidelines (<http://www.iap2.org.au/about-us/about/core-values>). Two of the values that have been particularly pertinent to this project are:

- Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process
- Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision

Even before the project began, the EMRC formed the Waste Management Community Reference Group (WMCRG) with representatives from the six member Councils as a forum for discussion and community input on the Resource Recovery Project and waste education activities in general. The WMCRG contributed to development of the wider community engagement process for the resource recovery project.

For many years the group met monthly. It now meets quarterly and is still active in providing feedback to the EMRC.

All feedback obtained through EMRC's extensive public consultation process has informed the project and will be considered in the final project decision about the ownership model and the technology. EMRC is committed to engaging and involving the community in waste management issues.

Early activity 2005 & 2006

During 2005 and 2006 the EMRC was researching options for the project including technology types and contract models, the financial viability of the project, the staging of the project and siting options.

2005 & 2006 -- Community surveys

EMRC undertook two community surveys, the first being a baseline survey to understand community views on whether the EMRC should take action to improve environmental management in the region.

Results from the survey:

- 93% of respondents felt that improved environmental performance in waste management was at least 'Quite Important.'
- Less greenhouse gases, more recycling, locating facilities away from houses and less tip volumes were cited as the most important features of new waste management systems.
- About 48% of respondents indicated a willingness to pay an extra \$50 per year for better environmental outcomes.

Validation market research was conducted in May 2006 to validate the workshop results with the wider community.

2005 & 2006 – Information sessions and regional workshop

In July and August 2005, project information and feedback sessions were held in each Council area to provide project information and to answer community questions.

These were followed by two regional workshops. The first, in October 2005, was attended by more than 100 participants. The workshop enabled community members to participate in the identification of potential sites for resource recovery facilities, and to develop the criteria that would be used to assess the various options for resource recovery.

At the second workshop in February 2006 community members were invited to weight the criteria they had helped to develop, and recommend preferred resource recovery solutions.

Feedback from the workshops:

- The four sites of Red Hill, Bayswater, Lakes Rd (Hazelmere) and the Perth Airport were the preferred options based upon the community's criteria and weightings.
- Biological technology options (including anaerobic digestion) were preferred, followed by gasification and combustion.

2007 - 2008

Project communication

Project information was updated on the EMRC website as required, and a waste management Update column was published periodically in the local newspapers.

During 2007 and 2008 the RRF project required little in the way of community input. Information about the project continued to be updated on the website and through E-Gang newsletters.

2009 Activity

At this time, the RRF project was moving towards a tender process by issuing an Expression of Interest request. To support this, the next phase of community engagement was designed to gather community views about the site and technology options which will be helpful to the planning decisions to be made by Council. No final decisions had been made on the location, technology or ownership model for the Resource Recovery Facility; and no spending commitments had been made by any of the EMRC's six member councils.

EMRC undertook significant community engagement activities in 2009.

Communication to workshop participants

EMRC advised the participants from the workshops in 2005/06 that the project was again moving forward and to explain the delay.

Community surveys and focus groups

EMRC contracted an external market research company to undertake community research on two specific questions: the acceptability of technology options, and the acceptability of what type of RRF could go on what site.

The research involved telephone surveys and focus groups held between May and July 2009 with participants randomly drawn from across EMRC's six member Council areas.

Resource recovery updates

Updates were published approximately every two months in local community papers.

Brochure

A comprehensive project brochure was distributed to 42,500 residences in Perth's Eastern Region in September 2009. Another 42,000 were distributed throughout the region in November. The brochure was also delivered to businesses in selected areas. The brochure (titled "Resource Recovery Update") provided greater detail on general project information. This information included the project's need, objective, benefits, site location, technology options, and timeline and community engagement.

Briefings

Briefings on the resource recovery project have been provided to the Red Hill Community Liaison Group (RHCLG) on an ongoing basis since this group was formed in 2009.

EMRC's six member Councils have been provided with periodic briefings including two in 2009. The first round of briefings was held in March, prior to the commencement of the Expression of Interest (EOI) process. The second round was conducted during November and December after the Council elections.

The EMRC offered presentations to groups across the region and responded whenever there was interest. Briefings were provided to the Gidgegannup Progress Association, Eastern Hills Progress & Ratepayers Group, Hazelmere Ratepayers Association, Hills Climate Action Group and the Swan Valley Ratepayers and Residents Group.

Displays

A week-long display was held at Midland Gate Shopping centre during its special "Green Week" event from 16-21 November 2009. A static display system was erected at Mundaring Shopping Centre from December 16-19 and was manned each day for two hours. A media release was issued and advertisements were placed in local papers to publicise the displays at both Midland Gate and Mundaring Shopping Centres.

A manned display was erected at The Red Hill Open Day on 7 November 2009.

2010 Activity

During 2010 the EMRC was gathering information from acceptable tenderers from the EOI process to assist the financial assessment and in preparation for the environmental impact assessment. It was also a year of significant continued community engagement and formation of a Community Task Force.

Waste to energy technologies forum

EMRC held a forum at Ascot Place on Friday 23 April 2010, with presentations on waste to energy technologies by Professor Nickolas Themelis and Robin Davidov, two eminent US practitioners in the area of waste to energy. This was an opportunity provided by their visit to Australia, hosted by the Waste Management Association of Australia. To find out more about this forum, and to download presentations from the speakers, please go to the Resources web page: <http://www.emrc.org.au/resources.html>

Doorknocking at Red Hill

In July 2010, EMRC officers undertook to personally visit the residents living within 1km of the Red Hill Waste Management Facility. As these residents live closest to the site of the proposed facility, it was important to make sure they had good information about the project, had the opportunity to ask questions, and knew where they could go for further information. Also it was an opportunity to invite these residents to nominate for the Community Task Force. And lastly, it was important to determine if these residents had any issues with current operations at the landfill site.

A total of 118 residences were visited over a four week period with 25 interviews conducted. Nearly half of those residents interviewed stated that they did not believe the proposed facility would impact upon their lifestyle. Seven of those interviewed stated they were concerned there might be an impact and listed their concerns over possible emissions, pollution of rainwater, odours and property devaluation.

Community Task Force created

In August 2010, EMRC established a Community Task Force (CTF) 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. Further information on the work of the CTF can be viewed at the Community Task Force webpage: <http://www.emrc.org.au/community-task-force.html>

Community Forum

A community forum on EMRC's Resource Recovery Project was held at Rosehill Lodge in South Guildford on Saturday, 18 September 2010, and was attended by approximately 60 community members. Feedback obtained at the forum was used in the development of a Community Partnership Agreement, tender evaluation criteria and in guiding community education.

A copy of the forum Powerpoint presentation and a report on the 18 September 2010 Community Forum is available at <http://www.emrc.org.au/community-engagement-resource.html>

Other community engagement activities

A project display was set up at Belmont Forum shopping centre in March 2010. Periodic Resource Recovery Update columns were published in community newspapers and presentations were provided to various community groups including the Swan Valley Residents and Ratepayers Association, the Gidgegannup Progress Association and a Red Hill Community Liaison Group meeting. Past updates can also be viewed on the Resource Recovery Project Latest Update page.

2011 Activity

During 2011 there were studies about the siting options for the RRF, preferred locations at Red Hill and selection of consultants to conduct the various environmental studies.

Community Partnership Agreement finalised - 2011

After regular meetings starting in August 2010, a draft CPA was agreed by the Community Task Force in early 2011 and then advertised for public comment. Feedback from the community was incorporated in the CPA by the Community Task Force and the CPA was endorsed by EMRC Council in August 2011. Full details of the CPA, the Community Task Force members and the meeting minutes are recorded at:

<http://www.emrc.org.au/community-task-force.html>

Community talks on technology options for the RRF

A community talk on anaerobic digestion technology was held at EMRC's Ascot Place office on Friday, 24 June 2011 and was attended by approximately 40 members of the community.

The forum was addressed by visiting overseas consultant, Mr Gerald Tetchner of Enertech in the UK and Professor Dongke Zhang, Foundation Professor of Chemical Engineering and Inaugural Director of the Centre for Energy at the University of Western Australia. Details of the presentations are available at: <http://www.emrc.org.au/resources.html>

Other activities

A project display was held at the Gidgegannup Agricultural Show. Periodic project updates were advertised in local papers, and newsletters were distributed to libraries, councils and to mailboxes in close proximity to Red Hill Waste Management Facility.

2012 Activity

During 2012, the EMRC prepared a Public Environmental Review (PER) report which the EPA approved for release for public comment. The PER preparation was preceded by environmental studies at Red Hill on odour impact, noise assessment and a background air quality study over several months.

Public Environmental Review (PER) released for public comment

The Public Environmental Review (PER) was released by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) for an eight-week public comment period (23 July 2012 to 17 September 2012). During that time, EMRC held two community information sessions about the PER's results and the submission process in Gidgegannup and Mundaring. The PER was widely distributed to government agencies, councils and community organisations. It was also displayed in local and state libraries. Newsletters were sent to libraries, councils and to the local community close to Red Hill Waste Management Facility, to encourage community members to review the document. Details on the PER and the EPA's Report and Recommendations are available at <http://www.emrc.org.au/per.html>

A Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) webpage was launched on the EMRC website in March 2012. The FAQ page features commonly asked questions, and also enabled community members to submit their own questions (see <http://www.emrc.org.au/questions-and-answers.html>).

An open invitation for the EMRC to visit community groups to speak about the resource recovery project was issued and still remains open.

2013 – 2015 Activity

The project received environmental approval in mid-2014. The EMRC resolved to stop the expression of interest process because of the time period elapsed, changes in the market and the potential uncertainties from the local government reform process which was underway.

No community engagement was needed or undertaken. Towards the end of 2015, Council briefings were undertaken with each member Council to discuss the technology and ownership options. The Member Councils and the EMRC have determined to proceed to tender.

2016 Activity

With the preparations for the tender release in August 2016, there was communication with the community about the RRF tender specifications and the potential outcomes of the tender process.

This included briefings of the Waste Management Community Reference Group (WMCRG), the Community Task Force, the Red Hill Community Liaison Group, the Hazelmere Progress Association, the Gidgegannup Progress Association, the Waste Authority, and the region's Earth Carers group. The Hovea Residents and Ratepayers Group was also briefed on the project on request in June.

Briefings were also offered to local Members of Parliament. Comprehensive information about the tender and tender process was provided on the EMRC website, and a media statement was released when the Request for Tender was issued. A one-page summary of the potential options was developed to assist in the face-to-face briefings.

2017 Activity

The EMRC website has been updated as the tender process has proceeded and a media release was added to the EMRC website on Friday 15 September announcing the outcome of the tender process.

This media statement was sent to the WMCRG members, the Community Task Force, member Council councillors and staff and other regional Councils.