



# Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee

**Inquiry:** Inquiry into the development and expansion of waste-to-energy (WtE) infrastructure in Victoria

**Hearing Date:** 07 May 2026

**Question[s] taken on notice**

**Directed to:** No Sunbury Waste Incinerator

**Received Date:** 4 June 2026

## 1. **Moira DEEMING, pages 9-10**

**Question Asked:**

I was just wondering what you would ask for in terms of – since we do have to manage the waste in some way, even if a waste-to-energy facility was just a transitional phase, was reduced to one for Victoria or something like that – what kinds of safeguards you would like to see from the EPA and the government? Just say you had your ideal system – it was just one and it was not in Sunbury: what kinds of regulations and safeguards would you like to see?

**Alison MEDFORTH:** I think that that is a much bigger question than I can provide an answer for right here and now.

**The CHAIR:** You are welcome to take that on notice.

**Response:** Unfortunately, there is no real answer to this question. While we do need to manage waste, even having one in the state, far from residents, undermines all waste-minimisation goals and the circular economy. The bigger problem here is also that we do not *know* what safeguards would be safe or necessary. The European best practices for these facilities, which have been so often referred to during these hearings, have been updated several times, as they have continuously been shown to have previously been insufficient. We do not think it is appropriate to gamble with residents' health and well-being. Even if we were able to name the best safeguards that could be put in place to protect residents, these would still rely on people to uphold them, which adds yet another break to that chain. This can be undermined intentionally or unintentionally, through negligence or true human error, but the results would still be the same - safety to the environment and communities cannot be guaranteed.

## 2. **Moira DEEMING, page 10**

**Question Asked:**

And I really liked you calling out accountability. I agree with you. I think that a lot of the processes in Victoria are backwards and that lots that could be

made transparent, with absolutely no risk or no damage to anyone, except perhaps politically to certain parties, could be released earlier. Again, what would your recommendations be for improved accountability and transparency in the consultation process for these things? ...

**Alison MEDFORTH:** Are we able to provide a fuller answer to that one on notice as well?

**The CHAIR:** Please, yes, absolutely.

**Response:** When we were dealing with the contaminated soil from the Westgate Tunnel project, limited data was shared with the people of Sunbury. A lot of what was shared was heavily redacted. I cannot think of a reason why any of this information could not be made public. In the written submissions for this enquiry, there are several confidential submissions, that we do not know who they are from or what they contain. There are many organisations involved in just this issue that have been having huge amounts of trouble getting access to information that there should be no reason to restrict. This is not transparency. Improving transparency should be easy - simply require all information to be publicly available in full, at the same time as it is available to any corporation or government body.

The next part of transparency in this scenario comes from awareness. It doesn't matter how easy it is to find the information if we do not know to look for it. Part of the answer here is that companies and regulating bodies both need to get better at reaching out to communities. This process is always going to be intensive to be done correctly - full letterbox drops, widely dispersed emails based on the electoral roll, extensive community drop-ins, notifications through the Engage Victoria app when there is an issue in your area, etc. However, it also comes down to education - many people do not know about Engage Victoria in the first place.

As for accountability, a lot of this, from my view, comes down to our legal framework, which appears to be full of loopholes to protect perpetrators and give impossible hoops for victims to jump through in order to be heard.

### 3. **Moira DEEMING, page 11**

**Question Asked:**

Take it on notice, and you can answer on notice as well. My last question is: there is a lot of focus on this one company. My personal view is that it could be any company and that we just need really, really good laws, really good oversight - like a functioning EPA. And that is what I am really keen to hear about. I am not keen to, I do not know, focus on one company necessarily. I just do not want any company to be able to do the [Zoom dropout]

**The CHAIR:** Apologies, Moira. We did lose you at the end there, but I think we got the gist of it.

**Response:** While we have been focusing on the one company - HiQ - as it is the one directly effecting us here in Sunbury, the things we have said broadly (not specifically) to all of these companies. The problem is that we do not have those laws, or those really good regulatory bodies, and nowhere else really does either. The Victorian EPA places a large emphasis on the General Environmental Duty, where companies are essentially required to police and regulate themselves, which is antithetical to any profit-driven company. And if we did, at some point, get these amazing laws and great oversight, can that be guaranteed that it would remain in place for the life of the plant? Funding can easily be cut, and regulatory bodies like the EPA always seem to be one of the first to feel those cuts. Regulations can easily be rolled back, and stripped of the very terms that made them work. And when that happens, it is the communities that pay the price. We cannot go into building these waste incinerators with wishful thinking.