

Submission No 7 for the INQUIRY INTO RECYCLING AND WASTE MANAGEMENT.

I was present during the inquiry and have the following questions that I would have liked to ask and statements I would like to make on each of the interviews.

Witness – Australian Paper (AP)

- AP have proposed a \$350 million dollar Waste to Energy plant in the La Trobe Valley. They intend to use about 40% of Melbourne domestic waste (not recycle bin waste). Their intention is to use the high temperature ( about 850 deg) in their paper plant and the remainder to produce electricity. They claim that there will be up to 25% unburnable waste out the bottom of the furnace. Waste will be transferred from city garbage truck to a transfer station where it will be again compacted and loaded onto train carriages and transported to the Latrobe Valley. This plant apparently has full Council and EPA approval and is ready to be built.

- There's a lot to be considered with this proposal. Equally there is good and bad. It means we don't send as much domestic rubbish to landfill which is good. If the EPA are ok with the emissions then that's OK I presume. They use less power off the grid and supply some out. The efficiency rate of the waste (assuming a set calorific value ) when converted into electrical power is similar to a brown fire power station. The down side is the quantity contracts that don't encourage reducing waste.

- There is a lot of consumer products that are hard to recycle. I.e Nappies, low grade plastic, pet litter in plastic bags, old cloths , small e waste etc. All of this ends up in our waste bin. This is a practical solution for that.

- Its not clear as to the size limits of what they are planning to use. Is it only waste from our bins or does it include domestic hard waste. I.e. Bits of wood (not green waste) ,mattresses, old furniture , odd car parts.

- I'm worried about the contracts that they want in place to make this viable. I'm sure they have a submission to this enquiry to get your blessing for their solution to the landfill issue and talk about what it will cost per ton for them to take waste. At the enquiry they talked about 20 year contracts would need to be in place to ensure this plants viability. This is where the problem is. They are relying on us to not get better at reducing our waste. And I'm sure they are expecting to get a lot of the mixed plastics that China now don't want even though they are not directly asking for it. The mixed plastics have a higher calorific value than domestic waste. They would not want us to solve any of our recycling problems and just be there to burn what we gave them. In other words they will be there when all of our initiatives don't work.

- After the enquiry I asked AP reps there a few questions. I asked exactly how the train system was to operate. Their answers appeared vague especially in regard to who pays for the set up and the frequency or number of carriages per day. If a contract is signed with them I hope this is worked out.

- AP stated that 25% waste from the furnace will end up in landfill. However some metal could be recovered from that although that process appears to be not quite worked out yet. Are we ok with the content of this waste going to landfill. Have there been any research on it.

- Is it only rubbish that produces the very high temperature. Do they feed in a combustible liquid to help achieve this.

- Will the EPA approval be looked at by anyone else with a critical eye on the emissions and the 25% landfill that this plant produces.

- I am worried by this system if 20 year contracts are signed that guarantee a set amount of waste both for the un incentive to reduce rubbish and the penalties if we cant supply what was promised. Will the calorific value of the waste be a contractual agreement. We don't want another toll road type of scenario.

- Is anyone aware of the waste to energy plant proposed in Laverton North by a company called Recovered Energy. This will be a privately financed costing \$100 million and is anticipated to use 200,000 tonnes of waste a year and supply 20,000 houses with power. Ready by 2022. EPA are currently considering the proposal. I asked AP what there thought were and they said that they knew nothing of the proposal and that \$100 million was far short of the target. I thought that was odd they knew nothing about that.

Ken Woodward

