




1 February 2017

Works Approvals
EPA Vic
GPO Box 4395
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

WYNDHAM COUNCIL LANDFILL – 470 WESTS ROAD WERRIBEE - APPLICATION FOR WORKS APPROVAL

I reside in the north west of Melbourne. The area to the north of me and to the west are two of the major growth and fastest growing areas for greater Melbourne.

It is inconceivable that any commercial organisation would seek to expand landfill operations when approvals for housing have been granted in close proximity to the extant landfill. That the EPA would even consider expansion proposals in the full knowledge that housing is under construction or programmed to be constructed nearby beggars' belief. There is something clearly amiss.

I am totally opposed to any expansion of the Wests Road Landfill operated by Wyndham City Council.

The expansion will add to the ugliness the landfill provides by jutting out on a plain. Already it obscures the view of the You Yangs. Further expansion will make the situation worse with a 25 – 30 metre mountain of waste eroding the visual amenity of the area and detract from the ability to entice more tourism to the You Yangs and Wyndham city.

It is a fallacy to believe that the foul odours can be contained. Hot weather exacerbates conditions accelerating decay and combined with unfavourable winds will carry the stench for many kilometres over existing housing and beyond. Has nothing been learned from the disgrace that was the Tullamarine Toxic Waste Landfill or the now closed Brooklyn landfill or the odour problems at Ravenhall extending to Carolyn Springs and Brimbank residences?

There are no appropriate barriers in place to prevent groundwater contamination. No matter how many protections are in place eventually the barriers fail and contamination enters the environment creating risks to human health and impacting adversely on the environment and the amenity of the area.

By allowing large scale landfills such as this proposed by the City of Wyndham (and Cleanaway at Ravenhall) a clear message will be sent to the world that EPA Vic does not subscribe to Environmental Justice. The world will know that EPA Vic regards the western suburbs of Melbourne as one great big rubbish dump.

To support the expansion would fly in the face of the Victorian Government Response to The State of The Environment Report 2013 where "The Victorian Government is strongly committed to environmental justice, including ensuring that the environment is protected for the benefit of the community, that the community is meaningfully involved in decision making,

that there is fair treatment through environmental regulation and that impacts and opportunities are fairly and proportionately shared."

Wyndham already has a sewage farm. Does it have to be a major rubbish dump as well? Where is the environmental justice in that?

The world is moving away from landfills. Instead, recovery and recycling, waste to energy, composting and a range of other methods are employed to reduce the need for landfill to an absolute minimum. Why does our waste industry, seemingly aided and abetted by the EPA, continue to utilise outdated and obsolete practices?

Allowing landfill operations to continue without forcing change to recovery simply encourages waste. Both industry and the community will believe it is quite acceptable to dump waste in landfills rather than engage in waste reduction practices. This is entirely the wrong message.

There are numerous technologies for better waste management. Waste to energy, compost, fertilisers, and road base to name but a few. Countries such as Sweden and Germany import waste to fuel their waste to energy plant such is the efficiency of recycling in those countries.

Instead of pandering to the short term interests of the waste collection industry whose profits are in direct relation to the amount of waste they collect and dump in landfill such industries need a paradigm shift by adopting the "one man's waste is another man's fortune" philosophy. But industry will not change unless forced to by an outside influence or it perceives a financial benefit. It is way past the time of the outmoded "dump it in a hole and bury it" attitude that prevails within the waste management industry. The EPA must look forward and take guidance from its forthcoming revised charter and strive to virtually eliminate dumping as a means of waste disposal.

Granting long term approvals of many decades does not encourage the waste collection industry to change its ways. In fact it merely encourages the continuance of obsolete and no longer acceptable practices.

Community expectations and government policy in relation to resource recovery requires that landfills be phased out. We need green field recovery sites with adequate buffers (up to 5km of planted parkland) to be established well away from urban centres and growth areas.

In relation to the approval being sought by Windham City Council (and other similar applications) I submit the need for long term approvals has not been established and request that:

- a. the expansion of operations above and beyond current approvals be denied;
- b. landfill operations within Urban Growth Areas be rapidly phased out;
- c. community involvement at all stages of decision making processes with high weighting given to the views of the affected community;
- d. there be full transparency and accountability at all stages of the waste management operations;

- e. proven sustainable resource recovery practices be instituted as a matter of urgency;
and
- f. EPA and Government commit to accelerate the use of alternatives to landfills already practised overseas. These include, but not limited to, Waste to Energy, composting, pyrolysis, recycling and repurposing.

In summary, there are better, more effective, efficient and less wasteful alternatives to landfill. It is incumbent upon the EPA to prevent the northwest and western growth areas being the flotsam and jetsam repository for greater Melbourne and nearby regional centres.

I urge you to refuse the Works Approval application.

