

## VCLC SUBMISSION

### RE: WASTE TO WOODLAWN: CURRENTLY AND IN THE FUTURE

#### BACKGROUND

The Tarago and District communities have observed an increase in waste vehicles travelling to and from the Woodlawn Eco Precinct, and subsequent increased wear and tear to the local roads being used. And, there has also been a recent increase in odour coming from Woodlawn.

The Tarago and District communities also note that the Woodlawn waste related activities and volumes have incrementally increased several times since initial approvals; and that there is now in progression a number of further discussions re actual direct or potential indirect increases to waste volumes to be delivered and processed at Woodlawn, some of which are deemed commercial-in-confidence and not being shared with the communities. As a result the local communities no longer believe that they have a transparent insight of Veolia's and Governments' current and future intended activities at Woodlawn.

#### PURPOSE

The purpose of this Brief is to articulate local concerns to Veolia, and as appropriate other parties, such as the State/Territory Governments and Local Governments.

#### COMMERCIAL-IN-CONFIDENCE

To aid in discussions, clarification is provided regarding what is and what is not considered to be commercial-in-confidence. Under NSW legislation the CLCs, and subsequently the Community Consultation Committees (CCC), are established for the proponents/operators of State Significant Developments (Project or Infrastructure) to advise local communities of development and operational impacts on community and infrastructure, and to seek feedback as to what is or is not acceptable, and to reach some form of mutual agreed way forward. Accordingly, any matter not directly or indirectly affecting community or local infrastructure can be considered as commercial-in-confidence, but anything, no matter how minor, affecting community and local infrastructure is not considered to be commercial-in-confidence.

For example, any long term vision of establishing a waste to energy incinerator of any type at Woodlawn at any time in the future is not considered commercial-in-confidence, and any intent to do so, need to be shared with the Community as soon as the intent is known. Any subsequent pricing agreement between Veolia and State and Local Governments (if established) is and should generally be commercial-in-confidence.

## **SIMPLISTIC OVERVIEW**

Woodlawn is a Sydney landfill that provides an essential service to six Sydney Councils that they cannot function without, and as such Woodlawn is afforded the status of State Significant Development (Project or Infrastructure).

All other waste (regional waste, including Canberra commercial waste) delivered to Woodlawn or processed other than landfilling (MBT) are ancillary (value added) services beneficial to Veolia. The Sydney Councils do pay a waste levy that the regional users of Woodlawn do not - this disparity is of concern.

## **REGIONAL WASTE - WHAT IS IT**

What is Regional Waste? We believe that waste coming from Sydney is all municipal waste. This is not the case for Regional Waste - its a mixture of municipal and commercial waste, and it is public knowledge that Veolia has been successful in securing a number of Government, Defence and other commercial contracts in the ACT and surrounds in the last two years - as well as additional local government contracts where the waste is being delivered to Woodlawn. What we do not know as a Community is how this translates into vehicle movements between the waste collection sites and Woodlawn, which is absolutely necessary for any rational discussions upon which informed decisions can be made..

### ***It is requested that:***

- ***Veolia confirm that all waste coming from Sydney is municipal waste; and***
- ***Veolia provides at the next meeting of the VCLC, tabulated data listing the contracted client and number of vehicle movements per week each way, and general route being used.***

## **ACT WASTE**

Canberra Recycling Solutions (CRS / namely Adam Perry) has proposed via an ACT Development Application to significantly reduce the volume of household, municipal and commercial waste going directly to landfill by processing recyclable waste within a Fyshwick materials recovery facility (MRF) and railing whatever could not be recovered for land filling at Woodlawn. No agreements exist with Veolia, nor has anybody sought licence approvals from the NSW Government to do this, with the exception of Transport for NSW granting CRS a \$1,000,000 grant to explore the feasibility of a Canberra Rail [General] Freight Terminal.

The CRS Fyshwick MRF proposal has been vigorously opposed by many in Canberra, including Barbara Moore representing a Kingston based community group and Jane Seaborn representing the Fyshwick Business Association. And, the ACT Government in response to

2020 election pledges by all political parties has now introduced the Planning and Development Amendment Bill 2021 that limits the processing of waste in Fyshwick. This Bill has a direct impact on CRS and Hi Quality, which was establishing a regional resource recovery facility in Fyshwick.

The Bill itself does not squash the concept of using rail to move waste from the ACT to Woodlawn, and with the ACT having significant growth occurring in the north and to the west of Canberra; this option must remain on the table particularly as the ACT Mugga Lane Landfill has a finite number of operational years available to it.

More important to the VCLC, is that Suez which is the incumbent contractor with the ACT Government for the kerbside collection of all household waste in the ACT; is currently subject to a Veolia world-wide purchase/takeover. If successful (target date around August 2021), Veolia will be the incumbent contractor by default with the ACT Government and thus responsible for the collection of household waste.

***It is requested that:***

- ***Veolia provide an update of its purchase of Suez at the next VCLC meeting;***
- ***Veolia / ACT Government advised of the remaining contract life for household waste in the ACT post Veolia's purchase of Suez; and***
- ***Veolia / ACT Government advise of its intended vision for the processing and landfilling of ACT household post Mugga Lane closure.***

#### **QUEANBEYAN PALERANG REGIONAL COUNCIL**

It is understood that QPRC has a contract with Veolia for the disposal of municipal waste from Bungendore (including Wamboin) and Braidwood at Woodlawn; all other municipal waste is currently disposed of through commercial recyclers and the ACT Mugga Lane Landfill.

According to QPRC's website, it is currently in the midst of developing a new waste management strategy - content and status unknown at this time.

***It is requested that:***

- ***QPRC provide a status update on the development of its new waste management strategy;***
- ***QPRC provide an overview of its vision re the way forward; and***
- ***QPRC explain how the VCLC and Tarago and District communities will be consulted in the new strategy's development, and concerns included.***

## **NEAR MISSES**

Under Workplace Health and Safety, and Chain of Responsibility Legislations risk and incident registers are required to be maintained. Under both Legislations, near misses are reportable risk incidents; however, there seems to be no mechanism for the reporting of near misses on roads, in particular the Tarago-Bungendore Road.

***It is requested that Veolia or QPRC advise at the next quarterly meeting of the VCLC how these near misses can be reported and how this information can be made public on demand.***

## **ODOURS**

In recent months there has been a spike in odour emissions from Woodlawn. It is understood that this was the result of a maintenance error, where the manifolds for gas extraction were not re-secured after servicing. However, odour 'events' have been experienced both before and after the maintenance error reported by Veolia. The Communities are again concerned that water inflow into the bioreactor is not being pumped out fast enough and treated, as per previous incidents of odour emissions.

***Can Veolia provide better explanation for the cause of the emissions and work undertaken or to be undertaken to prevent reoccurrence.***

Above said, and more concerning, was the Facebook discussion between pro and anti-Woodlawn/Veolia proponents. The extreme views expressed, by both sides, seemed to inflame the situation and cloud the data, and it has since been noted that some of these views were from people who live outside the odour zone, and some who work for Veolia and/or its contractors or are close friends of Veolia employees.

***It is requested that Veolia establish and enforce a clear policy that it is inappropriate for employees (theirs and contractors), and the family and friends of employees to engage in social media discussions regarding odour emissions from Woodlawn.***

## **RESIDUAL LIFE EXPECTANCY OF WOODLAWN AND LIFE POST CLOSURE**

All good things must come to an end! In terms of Woodlawn we do not know what the end is, in terms of site development or what post bioreactor closure looks like. The incremental increases from bioreactor, to MBT plant, to mining, to proposed SRF plant, and where this is leading to is now unknown.

***It is requested that Veolia, in liaison with Heron Resources, provide at the next meeting of the VCLC its long term planning/growth objectives (5-10 years) and longer term vision (10-20 years) for the Woodlawn Eco Precinct, especially in how it sees the management***

***and disposal of waste, and what community and local infrastructure will be needed to support this planning and vision.***

The ability to use Woodlawn as it is today will one day not be possible, but we are assured of one thing, waste will continue to be generated - the question is how will we dispose of it?

**MOTION**

**It is moved that VCLC formally provide Veolia, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council and the ACT Government with a copy of this Brief, and that addressees action the requests in the Brief and provide appropriate detailed responses to the next meeting of the VCLC to be held on ....**

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