Newsletter

Woodlawn Advanced Energy Recovery Centre *[ARC]*

19 May 2026

We are pleased to share the next edition of the Woodlawn Advanced Energy Recovery Centre project newsletter, bringing you the latest updates on the progress and upcoming milestones of the Woodlawn ARC Project.

Project timeline update

NSW emissions standards for energy from waste facilities have recently been updated, allowing the project team to start work to update technical studies and related reports, so that they align with the revised policy. This will include a comprehensive review of the Response to Submissions report and Amendment Report to ensure all information presented is up to date and relevant.

Inquiry into EfW - International Policy Context

In our last newsletter, we began examining false claims made by those who oppose energy from waste, providing the additional context often missing from submissions. This month, we're addressing claims about international policy directions on EfW technology. The article we're referencing is commonly cited by leading opponents of Waste to Energy technology.

The Claim: Critics sometimes argue that EU governments are walking away from EfW technology, that new plants are not being built due to environmental concerns, and therefore this technology should not be allowed in Australia.

The Reality: Our review of international policies indicates the opposite is true.

The 2017 European Commission communication on "Waste to Energy in the Circular Economy" clearly states that EfW has a role to play in managing non-recyclable, residual waste - provided it's consistent with the waste hierarchy where reuse and recycling are prioritised first. The Commission found this approach maximises greenhouse gas savings and resource use across the European economy.

Importantly, the communication does not find EfW is a hazardous technology, nor does it suggest a blanket ban on facilities. Rather, it recommends that member states avoid building additional capacity where sufficient facilities already exist to manage expected volumes of residual, non-recyclable waste.

This is a crucial distinction: Europe isn't rejecting the technology - they've simply built enough capacity over several decades of use to meet their needs as recycling rates improve.

Why European Financing is Changing

Critics point to European funds discontinuing finance for new EfW plants as evidence the technology is being abandoned. The actual reason is straightforward: Europe has used this technology successfully for decades and now has sufficient capacity to manage expected levels of residual, non-recyclable waste as recycling and diversion rates increase.

This isn't a rejection of the technology, instead it's a sign of a mature market that has already invested in the infrastructure it needs.

What This Means for Australia

Unlike Europe, Australia is decades behind in managing residual waste sustainably. While European nations have moved away from landfill as their primary waste management solution, Australia still sends the majority of non-recyclable waste to landfill, where it generates methane - a greenhouse gas 28 times more potent than CO_2.

International policies consistently recognise that EfW has a role in the waste management hierarchy - after reduction, reuse, and recycling - for managing residual waste that cannot be diverted from disposal.

What's coming up?

The NSW Select Committee visited the Woodlawn Eco Precinct and held a public hearing in Goulburn on 14 and 15 May. We welcomed the opportunity for the Select Committee to engage with both Community

and industry alike as part of their inquiry. For more information on the next steps, refer to the Select Committee on Proposed Energy from Waste Facilities website[1].

For more information

For further details on our upcoming engagements, FAQs and resources related to the project, please visit the Woodlawn ARC Project webpage.

Get in touch

Your feedback, questions, and ideas are important to us. Please feel free to reach out to us via email at thearc@veolia.com with any inquiries or feedback you may have.

[1] Select Committee on Proposed Energy from Waste Facilities