

# Project benefits



## Environmental Benefits

### Reduce waste to landfill by 380,000 tonnes a year

The Melbourne Energy and Resource Centre (MERC) will divert up to 380,000 tonnes of waste (equivalent to 300 Olympic sized swimming pools) that cannot be recycled from landfill each year. The MERC will generate over 40 megawatts of electricity net, for export to the grid, that will power over 70,000 homes.

### Recover metal

After thermal treatment, the MERC will be able to separate out materials such as glass, ceramics and metals that in infrastructure construction such as roads.

### Reduce greenhouse gas emissions

All waste-to-energy (WtE) facilities release carbon dioxide. Overall, it is estimated the MERC will result in a net reduction of greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to more than 230,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide each year – this is almost the same as taking 50,000 internal combustion engine cars off our roads.

This reduction is achieved in two ways:

- The reduction of methane generated from waste disposed of to landfill. Methane has 25 times more global warming potential than carbon dioxide so reducing methane has significant environmental benefit.
- The MERC will generate electricity, which will displace carbon dioxide released through fossil fuel-based electricity generation.



## Economic Benefits

### Stimulate Melbourne's economy

The investment in the construction of the project will be more than \$700m, providing a significant boost in economic activity in the post COVID-19 environment.

### Create local jobs

If approved, the MERC will create an estimated 800 jobs during the 3-year construction of the facility and will support 50 long-term skilled operational roles to run the facility once constructed.

### Reduce the cost of waste management

Waste-to-energy provides a competitive waste management alternative to landfill that future-proofs Victorians from progressive waste levy increases. In 2020, the Victorian Government announced its plan to almost double Victoria's waste levy - from \$65.90 to \$125.90 per tonne in 2023. This means Victorians will be paying more for waste disposal to landfill, charged through their Council rates. Delivery of the MERC will provide greater cost certainty to Councils and businesses by eliminating the impact of future levy increases, and the savings could be passed on to residents and businesses through a reduction in Council's rates.

Furthermore, there are long term savings when comparing waste-to-energy to landfill such as avoided costs for managing leachate (a toxic liquid produced by landfilling); land remediation (no residual land issues associated with WtE).



## Social Benefits

### Investing back to the community

Cleanaway will establish a Community Benefits Fund to support community initiatives across Wollert and the northern suburbs of Melbourne as part of the proposal. Importantly, the fund will be administered to the community, by the community.

For this reason, a dedicated Community Reference Group will be convened to report on community priorities and identify suitable project opportunities for discussion with the MERC.

The Fund will be available for community initiatives that contribute to:

- Environmental projects, including tree planting, heat reduction, waterway revitalisation, and the connectivity of green spaces.
- Sporting infrastructure, including upgrades to facilities e.g. lighting at women's sporting facilities.
- Community recreation including projects that benefit recreation spaces.

The MERC facility will include a Visitor and Education Centre, where the community can visit the site and learn about the circular economy, recycling, resource recovery and waste-to-energy. The facility will be open for public visits and tours around the facility. Cleanaway is keen to hear from the community about the programs you would like to see in this Visitor and Education Centre. You can share your ideas on the project website.