

The following questions were raised during the Conference of Interested Persons on June 20 and June 25. Please see Cleanaway's responses below.

1. When is Council being involved in the process?

Since 2022, both the City of Whittlesea and Hume City Council have been consulted with regarding the MERC Proposal. During various consultation stages of the Proposal, information on the project (including design development) and outcomes from technical assessments have been shared. This included meetings with various representatives from each Council to discuss specialist technical aspects and interests. In addition, engagement activities (including event promotion and registrations) have been shared with both Councils to promote through their existing networks. Consultation with both Councils is ongoing as the Proposal progresses.

2. The facility does not have a CHMP in place.

A Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* has been prepared for the Proposal. During development of the CHMP, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC) was consulted with regarding the Proposal and the potential impacts to Aboriginal cultural heritage, alongside proposed mitigation and management measures. During the complex onsite assessment for the CHMP, representatives from WWCHAC supervised the test pits and sampling methodology. The CHMP was submitted to WWCHAC on 01 February 2024 and approved on 12 March 2024.

3. When was this site chosen? Was it before or after the residential area and was the relevant minister consulted? Were residents consulted?

In identifying a suitable site for the MERC, Cleanaway undertook a thorough site-finding exercise, reviewing approximately 200 potential sites for their appropriateness to accommodate the facility from both an operational perspective and with respect to separation from residential areas. From this comprehensive screening process, a shortlist of four sites were identified. For these sites, a more comprehensive analysis and assessment (including but not limited to consideration of factors such as topography, neighbouring sites, and other overlays / buffers / easements) was undertaken prior to exploring the potential for acquisition.

The site was acquired by Cleanaway in December 2021. There is no requirement to consult with the Minister or residents prior to or following the acquisition of land. It would be premature for the proponent of a commercial project of this nature to engage with stakeholders until there is greater certainty around the form, scale and operational details of the project. As such, Cleanaway initiated engagement of the project at a point in the design process where meaningful responses could be provided to stakeholders and the local community. A flyer announcing the project with a link to the website was distributed to a 5km radius of the proposed site in late 2022. Community engagement was conducted over February and March 2023, with the first information session held on 18th February 2023.

4. In other states these projects are subject to an EIS, but not in Victoria. Why has it been excused from carrying out an EIS?

Under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* an EES referral for MERC was submitted under the greenhouse gas emissions trigger. The Proposal was referred under this Act as a precautionary measure because net emissions are expected to provide a carbon benefit, however gross emissions are close to the trigger threshold. On 5 October 2023, the Minister for Planning determined that an EES was not required for the Proposal, and that referral under the *Environment Protection Act 2017* was sufficient to cover potential environmental impacts.

5. The Public Exhibition submission process was very short.

The Public Exhibition period is determined by the EPA, and usually lasts for 15 business days. However, this period was extended to allow for additional time for submissions to be received by the community and stakeholders. The submissions period lasted from 20 February 2024 to 14 April 2024.

6. European best practice is not Australian Law. I don't see the relevance to Australia. Do we have laws in Australia relevant to incineration given we don't have any yet?

The Victorian EPA Guideline: Energy from Waste (Publication 1559.1) and Victorian Waste to Energy Framework (2021) require that best practice requirements are followed. International best practice is widely recognised as the European Union Best Available Techniques Reference Document for Waste Incineration (BREF-WI), last published in December 2019. The BREF-WI (2019) provides 37 Best Available Technique (BAT) conclusions based on the IED (Industrial Emissions Directive) and information shared between EU member states, numerous reference facilities and technology providers.

The MERC has been designed such that it is compliant with the definition of BAT used by the EU and set out in the BREF-WI. The facility therefore meets the requirements of the Victorian WtE policy and guidelines with respect to design aligned to best practice.

7. Will we hear from Cleanaway on our original submissions?

Cleanaway has provided detailed responses to all stakeholder and community submissions received during the Public Exhibition period. These responses were provided to the EPA on 29 May 2024 and will be made available to the public following their review. We have also provided a response to key themes raised by the community during the Public Exhibition process, which is available on our [website](#).

• Lilly D'Ambrosio and Bronwyn Halfpenny hold seats and none of them are here. Were they invited?

The Conference of Interested Persons (COIP) held on 20 June and 25 June 2024 was run by the EPA. Cleanaway was not involved in any decision making as part of this session, including promotion of the event.

8. We have made our submission and no answers have been provided.

Cleanaway has provided detailed responses to all stakeholder and community submissions received during the public exhibition period. These responses were provided to the EPA on 29 May 2024 and will be made available following their review. We have also provided a response to key themes raised by the community during the Public Exhibition process, which is available on our [website](#).

9. Where are the local members? They should be here. Were they invited?

The Conference of Interested Persons (COIP) held on 20 June and 25 June 2024 was run by the EPA. Cleanaway was not involved in any decision making as part of this session, including promotion of the event.