Appendix 10
List of Questions Received During Consultation

Port Hedland

August 25th 2011

Community Information Sessions

Questions Register

Q: What sort of wastes will you be processing?

A: Municipal (dependent on tendering for the service with the local council), Industrial & Commercial (eg from shopping centres), Construction & Demolition (eg pallets and plastic wrapping from large resource project construction)

Q: Is the idea that you take away the landfill? Will the Council shut the tip?

A: Our facility will give the Council an opportunity to send us waste instead of sending it to landfill. We hope to convince industry to come to us instead of the landfill because we are a better option than landfill. But ultimately, what happens to the landfill is up to the Council.

Q: Will you be polluting? What emissions are going to leak out of your reactor and burner etc while you process?

A: Nothing will leak out because the vessels are sealed. Everything flows through the gasifier, burner, boiler etc without escaping. Then we clean up the gas with a two-stage scrubber to remove acidic gases like sulphur dioxide, and volatilised metals like mercury, then we put the cleaned gas (mainly carbon dioxide and water vapour) up the stack. We won't be polluting.

Q: Is it really 'renewable'? How can you call it 'renewable'?

A: Yes, energy generated from biomass is renewable energy. It is the same as biomass power plants, except that our biomass is in the waste. The biomass is waste like wooden pallets and food. Not all our energy will be renewable because it does depend on the waste mix. But a lot of it will be.

Q: Are you relying on any government grants/subsidies/policies to make the project work?

A: No, it is completely self-sufficient without any external aid or change in policy.

Q: Do you have any plants in Australia?

A: No, but our technology supplier has many plants overseas.

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Q: Where are these overseas plants?

A: Three in Poland, but the majority in South East Asia eg Malaysia, Taiwan, Hong Kong.

Q: Do you have any plants doing this anywhere in Australia or elsewhere?

A: This will be our first plant, but we are using a technology from an experienced company called Entech. Entech has done a lot of medical waste plants, but they've also done other plants on other types of waste. All their plants are at a smaller scale to ours, but they have done some gasifiers of a similar size to the gasifier we are proposing. So we will take five of these gasifiers and put them in parallel (four will operate at any one time, one will be standby), and they will feed into a big burner/boiler system. The burner/boiler system will be bigger than anything Entech done before, but that's 'Best Available Technology', so that's from experienced equipment suppliers. The heart of the process, the gasifier, that's at a similar scale to what Entech has done before.

Q: How much is left after you've processed a load of waste?

A: About 5% - it depends on the type of waste – sand and soil will report to the ash. So we might have more ash if we get a lot of grit in the waste. But, for instance, wood is only 2% residue, so in all cases we'll have a large reduction in waste volume.

Q: Where do the ash and solids from the scrubbing go?

A: Although we ultimately want to find a beneficial reuse for the ash, like concrete strengthener or a component in road base, initially we will send our solid residue to landfill. We need to generate ash, do a lot of testing, and prove its composition and qualities to the DEC. At the moment, when we generate it, it will be a waste stream, and if we send it to someone else they'll be a waste processor, which makes it difficult for them, so we would be trying to get exemptions for the ash for reuse, by testing over a period of time and proving its qualities.

Q: Is it a big electricity plant?

A: Well, it's big enough to be industrial size, but it's not huge. It is 13.5 MW, so compared to the hundreds of MW installed to power a magnetite process, it's small. But it's big enough to power 15,000 homes (based on the national average of 20 kWhr/day), so it's still significant.

Q: Will you take green waste?

A: We will if it goes to landfill and can't be beneficially reused. In Perth, the composters want the green waste, so we reassure them that we are not looking for clean green waste streams – we won't be robbing them of their feedstock. But we understand in the Pilbara it's hard to reuse greenwaste...

Interjection: It's too hard to mulch it and it's always contaminated with bits of metal and plastic

A: ...yes, so in that case it's ideal for us because we can handle the plastic and metal.

Q: Can you handle creosote timber?

A: Yes, that's absolutely fine. Our process takes all the organics and puts them into the gas, and then burns the gas very efficiently. So any organics, like creosote, will just be volatilised or gasified and burnt in the syngas burner, completely destroying them.

Q: Are bits of metal a problem?

A: No, metal passes through our process and comes out in the ash. We might even run a magnet over the ash if we were getting enough metal in it, to recover the metal.

Q: Is this the same as the process they were going to put in at Gosnells? [the SWERF or Brightstar facility]

A: That facility was a lot more complicated. They had a lot of different processes. Gasification was only one of their stages. Plus their gasifier was of a different design – it was designed to get the waste through and gasify it in a few minutes, whereas in our reactor the waste sits there for hours and we process it very slowly. So you are right that they had gasification in their design, but our process is very different to theirs.

Q: Do you understand the costs involved in operating in the Pilbara? Just house rents, for example?

A: Yes, we do understand it is very expensive, and we have factored that into our project financial model and project planning. But we welcome all information, hints or advice on operating in the Pilbara.

Q: How many people will you employ?

A: 30 full time staff. We'll employ a mixture of supervisors, administrators, operators, tradies, technical assistants – a real mixture of different skills and tasks.

Q. Will you be able to process liquid waste?

A. Yes we will have one train dedicated to liquid waste treatment and tyres. There will be some liquids we won't accept and will require an analysis of waste prior to acceptance.

Q. Will you have a proper management plan for handling waste?

A. Yes we will ensure that the Company has procedures that are guided by the relevant Australian Standards.

Q. Can the plant treat waste oils and diesel?

A. Yes waste oils can be treated safely with this technology.

Q. How much water will the plant use because water is very scarce in Port Hedland?

A. The plant will consume around 100,000 KL of water per year. Most of this water is used for either cooling in the power production process or wash-down.

Q. Will this project help the litter problem in the town?

A. Much of the litter in South Hedland is blown from the tip. We intend to divert waste from the landfill and process everything in an enclosed building.

Q. Have you contacted "Care for Port Hedland" regarding the project because I am a member?

A. Yes we have spoken directly to the Chairperson of the Group, Kelly Howlett and we are also presenting to their next meeting in Port Hedland on the 12th September 2011.

Q. I live in South Hedland; will I be able to hear the plant?

A. No take a look at this map showing the sound profile of the plant. 25 decibels is audible to the human ear and by the time any sound wave gets to South Hedland they are between 10 – 15 decibels.