

# Waste energy conflict

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PROPOSALS for a waste-to-energy (WTE) plant at Lara have come under fire from a Geelong sustainability group.

Applications submitted by Prospect Hill International earlier this month revealed plans for a facility along 164-200 McMamus Road, Lara that could process up to 400,000 tonnes of waste every year.

But Sustainability Geelong president Vicki Perrett said the group had "serious environmental, economic and social

concerns about this proposal".

"Turning waste into energy sounds like a good idea but scratch beneath the surface and it's sometimes a very bad idea," she said.

Ms Perrett said the project didn't do enough to address the root of ongoing issues with waste and recycling.

"Burning destroys the resource forever which is totally counter to the city's and state government's circular economy policies," she said. "It's neither clever or creative."

A report submitted as part of the Environment Protection

Authority works permit application revealed the project "is expected to produce 25,538 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions" during its construction phase.

The group also raised concerns about the release of air pollutants and ash.

"We understand this type of WTE technology generates more carbon emissions than a coal-fired power plant, plus it emits all sorts of noxious gases including dioxin," Ms Perrett said.

"It's been obvious to many people since the demise of

SKM (Recycling) that regional investment in new and upgraded recycling infrastructure is desperately needed to increase the sector's resilience."

According to the project's report, the facility would generate bottom ash, boiler ash and air pollution to be disposed of in local landfill, but the company committed to seeking opportunities to safely reuse these materials to further reduce its environmental footprint.

Prospect Hill International project spokesman Roger Winders said the project would

act as "a beneficial project to divert waste from landfill while society transitions towards a circular economy".

It is estimated the project could create 200-300 jobs during the construction phase and power up to 50,000 homes.

Mr Winders said the diversion of waste from landfill would result in a "net reduction" in greenhouse gas emissions over time.

"While energy from waste plants generate carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) like many thermal plants that produce energy, the benefits of diverting waste

from landfill far outweigh the impact of these CO<sub>2</sub> emissions," he said.

"The greenhouse gas assessment found that the Prospect Hill International's energy from waste plant will result in a net reduction of greenhouse gas emissions of over 400,000 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e each year."

Plans are available for viewing and public comment on the EPA website until April 28.

An information session will be held by Prospect Hill International online on Tuesday, April 20, from 7.30-8.30pm. Find out more at [prospecthill.com.au](http://prospecthill.com.au)