

# ***ENERGY FROM WASTE SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT BRISBANE AFTERNOON WORKSHOP SESSION NOTES***

**Held:** 7 November 2002

**Time:** 2.00 pm – 5.00 pm

**Venue:** Brisbane Hilton

190 Elizabeth Street, Brisbane

For more information on the Energy from Waste Sustainability Project please visit the project website:

**[www.wmaa.asn.au/efw/home.html](http://www.wmaa.asn.au/efw/home.html)**

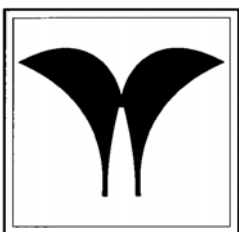
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This project is an initiative of the:

***Energy from Waste Division of the  
WASTE MANAGEMENT  
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA***

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## **Introduction**

There are a number of issues and concerns associated with energy from waste projects. On the positive side, recovering energy from waste can generate renewable electricity, reduce the amount of waste disposed of to landfill and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. However, there are also potential negative environmental and human health effects associated with energy from waste projects.

The Energy from Waste Division of the Waste Management Association of Australia, with assistance from Commonwealth funding through the Australian Greenhouse Office, initiated the process of developing a Sustainability Guide to resolve these issues. Part of this process was a national series of eleven stakeholder workshops.

The purpose of the stakeholder workshops was to ensure that all of the positive and negative factors associated with Energy from Waste (EfW) projects were identified and then incorporated and resolved within a Sustainability Guide for EfW. It is intended that the Guide will be used to ensure that Energy from Waste projects maximise benefits and minimise negative impacts in a way that supports the sustainable development of Australian society.

After the Brisbane Workshop a smaller group was invited to discuss and debate these issues in light of the draft Sustainability Project Scoping Principles that were prepared by the Working Group of the EfW Sustainability Project. Another focus of discussion was the requirements for an EfW Industry Code of Practice

The results of this discussion are presented below. This information will be used by the Working Group of the EfW Sustainability project in the preparation of the Sustainability Guide and an Industry Code of Practice.

The afternoon session of the Brisbane workshop focussed on identifying issues to be addressed in the development of an Industry Code of Practice (COP). These are described below. (Owing to time constraints and participant availability the Project Scoping Principles were not discussed.)

## **Suggestions for an Industry Code of Practice**

A general discussion was held regarding an Industry Code of Practice (COP). Below are the suggestions and comments arising from that discussion.

- Should not have an industry Code of Practice
  - will not be used in planning approvals at State level therefore of no value
- Could be called up in legislation?
- Flawed process of approvals
- Incomplete list of emission levels when compared against overseas experience
- Expect wrong decision out of Code because lowest common denominator – won't mention world's best practice
- lack of specific expertise/technical information amongst EPA's in general
  - CoP could provide needed support.
- German standards often used to set benchmarks
- Benefits of a nationally developed COP?
  - overcome funding restraints
- COP – voluntary code related to practical operational issues eg Medical Waste Code of Practice aimed at
  - protection of health
  - protection of Environment
- Need environmental regulations regarding potential emissions.
- Difference between approvals process and operation parameter
  - COP similar to QA process
- Need for monitoring equipment
- Validation & ongoing verification
- Minimum performance level should be licence conditions

- Fledgling industry
  - COP could be detrimental
  - more a longer term goal
  - not enough information to develop code
- World's Best Practice
  - takes time and effort
  - can't demand people to beat best practice – except in a new plant.
- Write it so that COP commits to a continuous improvement approach of operation
- Who monitors COP
  - need inbuilt review mechanisms
  - perhaps ISO 14000 mechanisms
- Start of process
  - establishing "bar" needs to be iterative process
  - first step needs to be in right direction (better practices?)
- Mechanism for consultation
- Narrow focus loses "bigger picture" lateral issues eg Nutrient cycles; Natural resource management; energy flows and balance in organic ecosystems; net export of energy and nutrients if don't set up 'natural' systems flows.
  - Need Code to aspire to biomimicry
- No CoP for other less desirable technologies.
- Need legislation to catch free-riders / 'cowboys'.
- Implementation of COP? Needs a plan eg would company be sued for non-compliance
- Waste Tracking?
- Legal issues:
  - ACCC - implication of prescribing destination of material
  - COMPETITION POLICY

- Objectives of document:
  - control of industry?
  - needs to be constrained in focus in order to be manageable (6 years of development for Clinical Waste)
- Who is industry is first question in developing CoP?
  - waste generator – providers of raw materials eg growers of food and fibre – the farmers
  - supply chain – (how to control peripheral contributors).
  - owner of resource:
- Competition for material eg cane farmers own bagasse. Now it is of value – want return.
  - Transfer of ownership
- Waste Tracking?
  - five part docket system?
  - In Queensland – anything that is a regulated waste would be traded eg tyres, oil, medical waste, solvents.
  - difficulties in implementation
  - auditable chain of supply
  - tracing spikes of contamination
- Issue of put or pay contracts
  - eg wood wastes
  - drives bad practice
- Energy purchasers do not go into supply of waste for energy generators – middle men concerned with returns on investment – too many developments for available resource.
  - Marriage of waste management with energy generation
  - Dealt with by specifications to manage fuel supply

**Appendix 1 – Brisbane Workshop Participants**

<b><i>Name</i></b>	<b><i>Organisation</i></b>
Brian Clark	Queensland Conservation Council
Mark Glover	Renewed Fuels P/L & Chairman of the Energy from Waste Division
Fenn Hughes	Brisbane City Council
Kylie Hughes	QLD EPA
Peter Lehman	Treeco Pty Ltd
Andres Maasing	Energy Developments
David Moy	TechSearch
Wayne Vaughan	SITA Environmental Solutions
Matthew Warnken	Warnken I.S.E. P/L - Project Manager and Workshop Facilitator