

PORTERS CREEK INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RECYCLING PARK

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Abstract

The Paper discusses the processes undertaken by Ryde City Council in progressing the development opportunities for a disused sanitary landfill located at North Ryde.

This site has operated as a Waste Management Facility since it was commissioned in 1969. Waste Service NSW constructed and commissioned the Waste Transfer Station adjacent to the site in 1985. Since that date, Council has utilised the site for construction waste processing and materials stockpiling. In 1992, Council recognised the need for a facility that would reuse the material from the waste stream. Council commenced community consultation in 1997 and the consultation is still progressing.

Key Words: **Integrated Waste Management and Recycling Park, Community Consultation, Telemarketing**

Introduction

Background

The Porters Creek site was developed by Ryde City Council as a Sanitary Waste Depot in the late 1960s. The Department of Public Health permission for creation of the Sanitary Depot was formally approved on 28 August, 1969 with operations commencing in October, 1969. The facility continued to operate as a Sanitary Depot until 1985 when the Waste Transfer Station at Wicks Road was commissioned. In 1982 Council commenced utilisation of the Porters Creek site to reprocess construction and demolition waste from its capital works program. When the Porters Creek site ceased to operate as a sanitary landfill, Council continued to process its construction and demolition waste at the site and continues to do same today. The Council averages approximately 20,000 tonnes per annum.

On 8 February, 1994 Council resolved to grant occupancy of a portion of the Porters Creek site to Waste Service

NSW to undertake a greenwaste processing trial. Following the success of the trial, Waste Service NSW has occupied the site and continue to expand the greenwaste recycling process on the site.

Ryde City Council has been in the process of attempting to develop an Integrated Waste Management and Recycling Park at Porters Creek since 1991 when it resolved on 10 December, 1991, to investigate the development of a waste recycling and processing centre at the Porters Creek landfill depot. This proposal received ministerial support following a delegation to the then Minister for the Environment, Mr C Hartcher, on 4 August, 1992.

On 10 May, 1994, Council resolved to reclassify the land at the Porters Creek site to "Operational", with the Government Gazette notification on the reclassification being notified on 26 May, 1996.

Following detailed investigations by Council Officers in association with Waste Industry Operators, a comprehensive report detailing the opportunities for development of an Integrated Waste Management and Recycling Park at Porters Creek.. Subsequent to deliberation of this report on 4 November, 1997, Council resolved to proceed with community consultation regarding the proposal in an effort to raise awareness of Council's proposals for the Porters Creek site. A major focus of the study was to generate discussion in regards to the proposal in the community and to raise concerns which might be further addressed by Council's future investigations.

In early 1998, Council commissioned Gutteridge Haskings and Davey Pty Ltd (GHD) to facilitate a preliminary community consultation process. This community consultation was undertaken in July/August, 1998 and culminated in a report which was presented to Council at its meeting on 8 September, 1998. The preliminary community consultation identified a number of areas of concern nominated by the Groups and residents who participated in the consultation process. Council resolved to prepare a draft LEP to rezone Porters Creek from "*Open Space - Recreational Existing*" to a suitable industrial zone and to call for tenders for consultants to prepare the necessary documentation. Council's intention in preparing the draft LEP to rezone the land to an industrial zone was purely to maintain transparency with the community. The proposal would be permissible under the Operational classification and the existing uses of the site.

Council commissioned Connell Wagner Pty Ltd to undertake a *Review of Environmental Factors* as part of the support documentation of the draft LEP. Council received a report on the *Review of Environmental Factors* on 14 March, 2000. At that meeting, Council resolved that the *Review of*

Environmental Factors and the draft LEP be placed on public exhibition for comment and sought the permission of the Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning to proceed with the exhibition of the relevant documentation.

On 29 June, 2001, Council received correspondence from the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning indicating that Council's application to exhibit the draft LEP was refused on the basis that development within the Macquarie Park corridor was currently being analysed under the Living Centres Program and that the traffic management issues associated with the development were significant.

Council continues to seek clearance from the Minister to formally exhibit the draft LEP and has modified its proposal as detailed below.

Scope of Works to be developed at Porters Creek

Council has, as a result of concerns expressed by the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning and the initial feedback from the community, re-assessed the extent and scope of the proposed development at Porters Creek to create an Integrated Waste Management and Recycling Park. Council's intent has always been to support the waste minimisation strategies of the State Government as well as to ensure the financial viability of any operation located on the Porters Creek site.

In terms of the current proposal of Council, the following elements are considered to be environmentally sustainable for development on the Porters Creek site.

Component	Total Tonnage
Waste transfer (non-recyclable waste)	300,000
Green waste	50,000
Commercial and industrial	120,000
Construction and road base	30,000
Total	500,000

Further Community Consultation

The application to the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning regarding the Draft LEP and *Review of Environmental Factors* received considerable local media attention. Unfortunately the media coverage was not balanced and created significant community concern over the proposed development.

On 14 August, 2001 Council resolved to place a moratorium on any further intensification of activities at Porters Creek pending the commencement of extensive community consultation on Council's proposal.

Council initially developed an Information Sheet which it distributed to residents via a letterbox drop in September, 2001. The Information Sheet attempted to place before the community, the current proposal of Council in respect to the development of the integrated waste management and recycling park. The Information Sheet incorporated a *detach and return* survey and of the 35,000 sheets distributed to local residents, 105 returns were received from residents requesting further information or objecting to the proposal and 9 returns were received in support of the proposal.

The returns that indicated a need for further information generally requested that the information meetings be held after the Christmas period. In addition, Council also received a petition containing 345 names entitled, *Say 'No'*

to Mega Waste Station. At this stage, there was active communication of *mis-information* to the community by a group of local residents committed to the cessation of any development proposals at the Porters Creek site. The Local Member for Ryde, the Hon John Watkins MP, was also publicly against the proposed development.

Council decided to commission an independent Telemarketing Company, to carry out a telephone survey of the local government area to establish the real level of concern within the community. It was decided to focus the survey target area on the East Ryde, Marsfield and North Ryde areas, which incorporated the location of most of the petitioners. The results of the survey indicated that 91% of respondents, were aware of Council's waste management responsibilities, 76% were aware of the location of the Porters Creek site, 36% were aware of Council's proposal and 42% were keen to receive more information.

The telephone survey did not establish that there was an overwhelming rejection of Council's proposal even though a significant media campaign had developed as a consequence to the actions of the lobby group and statements by the Local Member.

A series of Information Meetings were carried out in February/March, 2002. Again Council letterbox dropped the 35,000 local resident properties within the local government area with a formal invitation to attend the Information Meetings and site inspections. Despite

the invitation coverage, along with comprehensive advertising in the local media, only 327 people participated in the Information Sessions and 146 people participated in the site inspections. A feedback sheet was distributed at the Information Meetings and Council received 122 responses: 110 objecting to the proposal and 12 supporting the proposal.

A second Community Information Sheet was distributed to the residents of Ryde detailing the outcomes of the Information Sessions. Again the feedback sheet also incorporated a short survey that could be forwarded back to Council. A total of 317 responses have been received from Ryde residents of which 71 (22.4%) supported Council's proposal for an integrated waste management and recycling park. In addition to the Ryde residents, a total of 49 responses against the proposal were received from Ku-ring-gai residents.

Council commissioned a second telemarketing survey of the local government area. This survey was designed to be statistically relevant to the local government area and is random in the nature of its target respondents. The survey results are preliminary. A total of 1000 respondents were sought and gained from the Telemarketing survey. Of the 1000 persons who responded to the survey, only 455 were aware of Council's proposal. Of the 455, approximately 95% were aware of the location of Porters Creek, only 92 (20%) explicitly objected to the proposal and 154 (34%) explicitly agreed with the proposal.

Conclusion

The conclusions that can be drawn from the community consultation on this issue is that the majority of residents within the local government area demonstrate little interest in the proposal. The most significant action groups are those that feel they will be impacted adversely by the development of the site. By far the most significant issue surrounding the development is that of traffic management and the perception that the proposed development will significantly increase traffic movements within the local road network. The technical analysis of traffic management issues does not support this concern, however the community at large is convinced that a traffic management problem exists with the proposed development.

The real challenge to local government is the need to properly inform the community of these issues in such a way that the community can make a fair judgement on the likely impact on their amenity. Unfortunately, it is too easy for critics to create a smoke screen of mis-information that supports their position in demonstrating a perceived problem. The technical argument is seen by the community as a fabrication of technical jargon that does not represent the true impact of the proposal.

In order to offset this standard sequence of events, it is critical for local government to be *pro-active* in the communication of proposals to the community. It is too late to wait for objectors to sound their discontent. Local government needs to take on a more positive marketing role for their activities and initiatives.

Author Biography

Tony Reed has been Group Manager - Public Works & Services at Ryde City Council for the past six years. He has 30 years of experience as an Engineer and Senior Manager in both Local Government and State Government. Tony holds a degree in Civil Engineering and has post graduate qualifications in Marketing Management and a MBA..

From a business perspective, Tony has focused on the development of efficient work forces delivering municipal services. He has also been actively involved in community consultation on issues of significance to the community.

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