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REASONS FOR DECISION UNDER *ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS ACT 1978* (Referral Number 2023-R02)

Proponent

Cleanaway Operations Pty Ltd

Project

Melbourne Energy and Resource Centre (MERC)

Description

The project comprises a waste-to energy facility at 510 Summerhill Road, Wollert, known as the Melbourne Energy and Resource Centre (MERC). The MERC will thermally treat approximately 380,000 tonnes per annum of waste feedstock, composing primarily of residual municipal solid waste and residual commercial and industrial waste. The waste to energy process will generate approximately 46.3 MW gross of electricity, with 41.6 MW (328,700 MWh/year) exported to the grid as base load electricity.

Key components of the project are:

- main waste processing building, including the tipping hall, waste bunker, boiler building (utilising moving grate combustion technology), flue gas treatment, residue materials handling and conveyor;
- air pollution control residue stabilisation facility;
- incinerator bottom ash maturation and an incinerator bottom ash processing hall; and
- internal roadways, staff and visitor centre car parking, articulated truck parking area and truck shed, and an A-Doubles decoupling area.

Decision:

The Minister for Planning has decided that an environment effects statement is not required for the MERC waste to energy facility.

Reasons

- The project has potential for effects particularly in relation to air and greenhouse gas emissions and waste, which are unlikely to be significant and/or can be readily managed through existing statutory processes. The development licence and operational licence approval processes under the *Environment Protection Act 2017* will readily enable the appropriate and transparent examination of these potential effects.
- Residual effects on amenity (such as noise and odour) and Aboriginal cultural heritage are unlikely to be significant and can be readily addressed via existing statutory requirements.
- The effects on native vegetation and other biodiversity values are not significant due to the siting of the project on cleared agricultural land. Offsets for limited impacts to native vegetation and biodiversity values can be readily addressed in accordance with policy.

Date of decision: 5 October 2023