

Thursday November 1, 2012

10:51 **Mercury:** Welcome everyone to our live blog on the proposal for a C-cell the Copping tip site.



10:52 Grab you coffee or tea, settle in and start sending in your questions for what we hope will be a lively discussion.

Christine Bell is in the office and will start answering your queries soon.



11:03 **Comment From June Phillips**

About 6 weeks ago we had very strong winds and some rubbish from the tip ended up on our property. My question is what guarantees do we have that the rubbish can be contained on site on a very windy day?



11:05 Hi June, The type of waste to be deposited, which will generally be soil and no fine particles, combined with the distance to the nearest property, make it unlikely that any waste will leave the site. In addition our permit conditions require SWS to prevent dust emissions being an environmental nuisance.



11:06 We also plan to monitor dust, even though it's not required.



11:06 **Comment From mark hawkes**

Is proposed site based on best outcome or best costing?



11:07 Hi Mark, the design is based on the best outcome. It wasn't in fact fully costed until after approval. It exceeds design requirements for such a cell in that it has more layers than specified as best practise.



11:08 Do you support the construction of a C-cell in Tasmania?

Yes.

(54%)

No.

(46%)



11:08 Do you support the construction of a C-cell in Tasmania, given that we are the only state without one?

Yes.

(70%)

No.

(30%)



11:09 Comment From Guest

Why wasn't a state-wide assessment carried out to determine the best place to build a C-cell?



11:11

A statewide report in 1991 identified the need for a C-cell in Tasmania and recommended three be built. In 1993 a joint study by the State Govt and the Southern councils examined possible sites a southern C-cell and recommended Copping.



11:11

Comment From Guest

Is SWS prepared to pay carbon tax apparently some tips are expecting to pay in the hundreds of thousands in tax



11:12

We are currently below the threshold for carbon tax, but expect to exceed the threshold within the next two years. We are putting in place practises such as methane flaring and electricity generation to minimise the impact.

Any costs will be passed on in gate fees to the community.



11:12

Comment From Pandora

Why didn't SWS exceed best practice in relation to community consultation?



11:14 It is not true to say that only minimum statutory consultation was undertaken. Statutory consultation is the responsibility of the planning authority and the EPA. In addition to this minimum SWS sends authority agendas to adjoining landowners. The C-cell has been on these agendas since 2008. SWS also wrote to adjoining landowners a week before the statutory consultation period started and offered personal briefings.

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11:15 SWS also printed and distributed 500 leaflets in the municipality. Nobody took up the offer of a briefing or asked us for any information.

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11:15 **Comment From June Phillips**

Christine, you use generic terms like "unlikely" If jarosite was dumped at the site, then we need guarantees not "unlikely". Can you guarantee that no jarosite dust would travel 3 kms?

 [Share](#)

11:17 June, it would be disingenuous of anybody to give a 100% guarantee but in this case I will guarantee that no jarosite dust will travel 3km. Please note that jarosite, however, is not coming to the cell. It is going to South Australia for reprocessing.

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11:17 **Comment From William**

What exactly does "C-Cell" mean, what sort of "Category C waste" is likely to be dumped at Copping and how exactly will it be stored/contained/disposed of?

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11:19 Landfills are classified as:

A -- unlined, can take only cleanfill, etc

B -- engineered and lined and can take domestic waste and level two waste subject to EPA approval for each load.

C -- more highly engineered and lined, can take level 3 waste, subject to EPA approval

Note that waste is classified up to level 4, which won't be accepted. Nuclear waste is not allowed.

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11:21 The type of waste we will accept is level 3, non-liquid, for instance metal-contaminated soil and timber.
It will be contained in an engineered cell with multiple layers, including four impermeable layers designed to withstand earthquakes 10,000 times greater than ever recorded in Tasmania.
It will be separated within a cell and able to be re-mined and reprocessed as technology changes.



11:21 **Comment From Victoria**
The question you're asking should not be do support the construction of a C-cell in Tasmania, but do you support the construction of a C-cell in Copping. Surely Southern Waste Solutions can't argue that this is the best place for a C-cell?



11:22 Yes, we can argue that Copping is the best place for a C-cell. Studies going back to 1993 identified Copping as a suitable location.
Subsequent detailed scientific studies support this.



11:23 **Comment From Claire Burnet**
Given the negative public response to the location of this C-Cell (i.e. within the Carlton River Catchment) , what are SWS planning to do now?



11:23 SWS is planning to continue trying to engage with the community. We are advertising for membership of a community reference group to facilitate ongoing communication.



11:24 **Comment From Glenn**
How much money does Southern Waste Solutions expect to make from the C-cell? And what return will it generate for the four councils that run SWS?



11:25 The business case will include a reasonable commercial rate of return to the owner councils. Please note that a reasonable commercial rate of return does not mean multi-million dollar sums, as some people have suggested!

Any profits may be available for distribution back to the owner councils.



11:25

Comment From Mark

Anyone answering 'no' to the poll question needs their head read. How is shipping our waste offshore the best environmental outcome in any conceivable sense? The only questions should be where Tasmania's should be, and the process used in determining that. NIMBYism is unsustainable.

 Share

11:25

Thanks for the support, Mark.

 Share

11:25

Comment From Julie

What's to stop toxins from the cell from leaking into our soil and water?

 Share

11:27

The landfill is designed to prevent leakage and protect the environment for thousands of years. The waste is NOT toxic.

Refer to one of the earlier posts about the C-cell design, or see our website, <http://swstas.com.au>

 Share

11:27

Comment From Guest

Was Copping only recommended because of the current tip site.

 Share

11:28

No it was identified as a greenfield site in 1993. The current landfill was not planned until 1998.

 Share

11:28

Comment From Linn

Christine, would you be happy to live near a C-cell?

 Share

11:29

Yes, I would. There is a similar cell in the middle of suburban Melbourne, within about two city blocks of densely populated residential area. This cell operate successfully and a recent health study by the Victorian Dept of Health demonstrated no negative health effects.

 Share

11:29

Comment From Angela

We don't need a C cell in Tasmania to be clean and green - in fact this is now old technology. Recycle - incineration and reclamation of material is now the most technologically sound way to go in many countries.



11:32

We are the only state without one of these cells. Landfilling is a last resort, but scientists recognise that it is an essential facility. You cannot incinerate soil. Refer above, waste will be able to be re-mined and reprocessed as technology advances and as resources become more scarce.

Remember that most of this waste will be classified as level 3 because of metal content.



11:32

Comment From Pandora

Do plans for things like electricity generation have approval already?



11:33

The earlier question about carbon tax and the answer including electricity generation relates to the existing landfill. Waste from the C-cell will not produce gas to generate electricity.



11:33

Comment From Angela

Who will gain financially from construction of the C cell in relation to collection and transportation of controlled waste, particularly from Antarctica?



11:35

Transport companies will benefit from the transportation of waste. The community will benefit by owner councils from the landfilling of the waste. The world in general benefits from research and conservation carried out in the Antarctic.



11:35

Comment From Caryn

In your pamphlet handed out at the public meeting SWS states that no body parts will be taken to the site (the hep a issue), you have also stated that asbestos is not and will not be accepted - yet both are already taken there on a regular basis. How can the community trust your assurances in regard to procedures and materials when we already have such contradiction?



11:37 No Caryn, body parts do not come to the existing landfill and will not come to the C-Cell. The existing landfill accepts treated medical waste, and this will continue. Medical waste includes items such as bandages and used sharps and sharp container. It does not include body parts (they go to the crematorium) or bulk blood.

Asbestos will continue to be accepted subject to stringent EPA requirements at the existing landfill and at all other B landfills around the state.

 [Share](#)

11:38 **Comment From Flipper**

How would Southern Waste Solutions fund clean up costs if there was a leak or "worst case scenario" incident? And how much has SWS set aside for the long-term maintenance of the C-cell once it is full.

 [Share](#)

11:38 We are setting up a trust fund that will guarantee funds long into the future.

 [Share](#)

11:38 **Comment From Jill**

My question is where is all the toxic waste now and why do we need to change

 [Share](#)

11:41 A lot of it is sitting uncontained on river banks and in industry's back yard. For instance a large source of waste for the cell will be the Hobart Railyard rehabilitation project. It is better practice to store such waste in a properly engineered and secure cell to eliminate the risk to the environment.

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11:41 **Comment From Guest**

I'm really concerned about waste in Tasmania which is unprocessed, not properly contained and sitting stockpiles. It also really concerns me that hazardous waste is currently taken to facilities not designed to take it. I'll be upfront and say I support a c-cell in Tasmania as it will help us comply with the BASEL convention and ask that given the site is expected to cost \$9 billion, how will it be funded without the commitment of Nyrstar?

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11:42 It will be funded via gate fees, so the producers of waste will pay for its disposal. This will give incentive to industry to look at ways of reprocessing or minimising their waste.

PS It is more like \$9 million, not BILLION!

 [Share](#)

11:42

Comment From Guest

is it true that once approval has been given it can not be revoked?



11:42

Simple answer: yes.



11:43

Comment From mark hawkes

Yes, you are correct only one councillor voted against the C Cell. My decision to no longer support came after being flooded with conflicting scientific information as well as no consultation happening, something I requested in the first place Posted by: Kerry Degrassi of Dodges Ferry 1:30pm Monday; May I have comment on this please?



11:43

Please refer your question to the councillor concerned.



11:44

Comment From Guest

South Cardup has been down this track of using landfill liners in the same manner as your proposed C Cell. Locals fought this proposal to no avail, now they face manner issues with ground water pollution in surrounding areas. What makes this proposal any different, what safe guards are in place to avoid issues this community has been left with?



11:45

I am not aware of the specific landfill that you refer to. The Copping cell is designed to exceed best practice and is expected to remain secure for thousands of years.

Please note that we expect the waste will have been reprocessed by then.

A trust fund will be established to fund ongoing maintenance, etc.



11:45

Comment From Guest

Will the financial benefit derived from the per load income shared with the rate payers?



11:45

Profits from the C-cell will be available for distribution as dividends to owner councils.



11:46

Comment From Caryn

Christine, if 500 leaflets were distributed in the community, how come no one knows about them? Wouldn't mentioning it in Council newsletters, posting with rates notices etc have been appropriate? It has been ascertained the community did not know about the plans - hence the backlash.

 Share

11:47

We have acknowledged that, with hindsight, we could have done more to engage the community. This is why we opened a further 30-day voluntary consultation period.

 Share

11:47

Comment From Angela

That's the trouble SWS - research into the C cell - was undertaken so long ago its now so old and out of date. If research this old was held up by most organisations to be current it would be laughed at!

 Share

11:48

The research was reviewed as part of the current planning process and the design exceeds today's world's best practice.

 Share

11:48

Comment From Pandora

Such a quick reply to Mark, the internet is blistering today

 Share

11:48

Comment From Claire Burnet

Can you please explain how the community reference group will be selected, what percentage of participants will be for/against the C-Cell, what the aim of the group is and what outcomes the group will be able to achieve given that SWS has clearly stated they will build the C-Cell regardless of concerns.

 Share

11:50

Applications forms are available on our website. We will set up a selection panel, including people other than SWS staff. We certainly hope to have a diversity of views around the table. We plan to have around 10 people as part of this group.

The fact sheet and terms of reference are also available on our website or by request by email or phone.

 Share

11:50

Comment From Grace

There are many alternative methods available for treating contaminated waste - landfill is widely accepted as being the least desirable way of treating contaminated waste. Why haven't SWS considered any such alternatives?

 Share

11:51

It is not up to us to consider alternatives. We will set a commercial gate fee that will encourage waste generators to look at alternatives.

 Share

11:51

Comment From guest

I think the issue is not do we need one or not but where is the best place for one, with the least amount of risk to the environment and community.

 Share

11:51

Comment From Ian Nelson

I've been wondering why Sorell residents don't appear worried by the lack of reticulated sewer in coastal areas. I would have thought this was a bigger and more concerning environmental issue than a fully engineered C-cell subject to regulated environmental controls. Having seen first hand industrial waste stored inappropriately with run-off into waterways, I would have thought this development was a sound step forward for all Tasmanians.

 Share

11:53

Details of monitoring undertaken in the Carlton River Catchment are on our website.

 Share

11:53

Comment From Ingrid

Who will be liable when a truck carrying hazardous waste being driven aggressively along the goat track they call the Arthur Highway has an accident causing catastrophic consequences to the environment and the population?

 Share

11:55

The driver would be responsible. Quoting from the EPA fact sheet: "Materials being transported to the Copping cell will present much less risk to the public and the environment than many of the everyday commodities and products routinely transported in heavy goods vehicles. The waste materials destined for the Copping cell are not acutely toxic and, being solid, are generally amenable to clean-up." For example, fuel transport is of much greater risk to the environment as are vehicle accidents in general with their associated liquid hydrocarbons.

 Share

11:55

Comment From Nicol

Dictionary definition of toxic - toxic ˈtɒksɪk adjective 1 poisonous: the dumping of toxic waste



11:56

Toxic = poisonous. Poisonous = dangerous, likely to kill you when ingested. The Copping C-cell waste will not be toxic. There is a detailed scientific paper about this issue on our website.



11:56

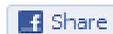
Comment From Pandora

Is the tactic Mark uses, that opponents are people who are mentally deficient and that they do so because they are NIMBYs lower the debate and overlook the reality that local residents have been required to scrutinise a mass of scientific and regulatory material?



11:58

I don't think Mark said people are mentally deficient. And people aren't required to scrutinise scientific and regulatory material. That is up to the EPA and the planning authority. It is interesting, however, to note that NIMBYism was identified in 1993 as being a potential issue in relation to developing a C-cell.



11:58

Comment From Sam

Given that the type of waste this site will accept, how do you feel about the coverage this proposal has had in the media, esp with headlines such as 'Toxic dump' etc?



11:59

Not happy, Sam! For example nothing listed on the front page of the *Mercury* in the initial article that kicked off this angst will come to the C-cell.



11:59

Comment From david

yes incinerate the waste, but build a c-cell to dispose of the incineration residue (ash)



11:59

Comment From Ian Nelson

The comments regarding incineration are interesting. Have people forgotten the proposal for a industrial incinerator at Brighton? That didnt proceed because of community objection. Now people appear to be saying that it is a acceptable option. This is starting to look like a NIMBY issue.

 Share

12:00

Comment From craig

Worldwide research has demonstrated that Landfill liners don't work; 1. The liners leak, 2. Toxic gas is released, 3. They pollute ground water. Why with many papers indicating these issues is the proposal so close to the Carlton river?

 Share

12:02

Please quote your research. We have research to the contrary. Our cell will not leak as there are multiple liners. There will be no gases released form the C-cell due to the type of waste accepted. And the cell is 1750m from the Carlton River.

 Share

12:02

Comment From Ingrid

How has the long term performance of the C-cell been assessed given that long term data models cannot be verified?

 Share

12:02

I suggest you read the documents available on our website (swstas.com.au)

 Share

12:03

Comment From Guest

Incineration is not the way to go as it produces toxins into our atmosphere and then we really are exposed to them. We could do better with recycling but we do need a c-cell. Currently our waste is getting shipped over bass straight and sitting in stockpiles, unprocessed and uncontained. Not only is this unacceptable but it's against the BASEL convention.

 Share

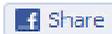
12:03

Comment From craig

Please name the report that has investigated the best location for C Cell in Tasmania?

 Share

12:03 Please refer to our website.



12:04 **Comment From Grace**

If the active evaporation system cannot keep up with demand during wet periods, it has been stated that leachate will be taken offsite. Can you please provide details how such liquid leachate would be transported, given that transportation of leachate in liquid form is much higher risk and will also be transported past many waterways (thus having the potential to cause serious water contamination in the event of an accident?). How and where will this liquid leachate be stored off site, and how will it be treated?



12:05 Leachate pond capacity will be sufficient to cope with extreme weather events. Active evaporation is a backup procedure. It is 99.9% certain that leachate will not need to be carted off site. If it was, it would be by licensed carrier. Refer above, re risks by everyday transport.



12:06 **Comment From Pandora**

We've heard about this waste allegedly sitting on riverbanks before. This sounds unlikely, rivulet banks perhaps, but in any case, can we have some examples of this and what the EPA have done about it?



12:06 Hobart Railyards. On river bank. Uncontained. To be cleaned up.



12:07 **Comment From mark hawkes**

Is the land under proposed site vulnerable to earth movement?



12:07 No. Hundreds of hours of surveying on site by scientists have shown the site to be extremely stable.



12:08

Comment From Phil Webb

Seeing that the permit can not be revoked (without potential litigation) then all this public consultation it just lip service and SWS will proceed and build the C Cell anyway. so the main aim was to get this past the post and obtain the approvals and then deal with the backlash of angry residents. Our council has a lot to answer for. next they will be dumping contaminated building material in some ones back yard.

 Share

12:09

The additional consultation was not just lip service. We genuinely wanted to hear the community's concerns. We propose to make change sin the way we operate as a result of the additional consultation.

 Share

12:09

Comment From Pandora

Perhaps the landfill profits could fund a sewerage system!

 Share

12:09

Comment From Mark

'catastrophic consequences', for heaven's sake. Get a grip, Ingrid. Hurricane Sandy is catastrophic. An overturned rubbish truck carrying even the worst possible cargo is not catastrophic.

 Share

12:09

Comment From Claire Burnet

I've just had a look at SWS temporary website (<http://swstas.com.au>) and can't see the application forms or any info at all about the community reference group. Can you please let me know where to get them and when applications close. Also, when will your official website be ready? It has been 'in the making' for months now. The opponents of this campaign have managed to get their website up and running - <http://www.crcsbcs.blogspot.com.au>

 Share

12:10

Sorry, must not be up yet. It will by the end of the day. Re: the permanent website, I have been a bit distracted by other matters. Hopefully it will be ready by the end of this month.

 Share

12:10

Comment From Mark

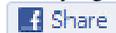
No, local residents are not required to scrutinise a mass of scientific and regulatory material. That's the job of the representatives they elect, the laws they make, and the regulators they appoint. Second-guessing everything they do is a recipe for total paralysis.

 Share

12:11

Comment From Robyn

I'll try again... Do you think an on site security camera is a good idea? NOW & in future.



12:11

Security cameras might be a good idea because we have had lots of instances of trespass lately. But seriously, we are not open to the public and are heavily monitored and regulated. Our monitoring results (refer website) prove compliance.



12:12

Comment From Mark

Let's see a link to that (presumably peer-reviewed) 'worldwide research' that led you to make such a sweeping claim, Craig. And even if correct, what's your alternative?



12:12

Comment From Caryn

How far have you progressed with construction of this cell so far?



12:12

Construction has not yet started.



12:13

Comment From Angela

If shipping is such an arguable point re transportation Kms why is it viable to bring waste back from Antarctica when there are already in-situe cleaning alternatives? Is this because it is a lucrative option for interested parties?



12:13

It is part of the Antarctic Treaty that all waste must be removed.



12:13

Comment From Caryn

Thankyou Christine for taking the time to answer these concerns and put on record your responses.



12:15

Mercury: Thanks everyone for you questions. Unfortunately we have run out of time. Sorry that we couldn't get around to everyone's question, but hopefully we;ve covered just about everything.



12:15

Mercury: Thanks also to Christine for your time. It has been much appreciated. And we'll see you all here again next week.