



ACT
Government

Hume Materials Recovery Facility

Engagement Report

A summary of the engagement undertaken in preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement for a new materials recovery facility.

Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) is Ngunnawal country. The ACT Government acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as the traditional custodians of the Canberra region and recognises any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region.

The region is a significant meeting place to the Ngunnawal people and other people and families who have gathered here for thousands of years.

Transport Canberra and City Services acknowledges and respects the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region, and their historic and ongoing connection to our lands, waters, and sacred sites.

We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Introduction

Background

The ACT Government is proposing to replace and upgrade the existing Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) in the Hume Resource Recovery Estate.

The existing MRF was extensively damaged by a fire in December 2022 and the facility is no longer operational. The main shed is still standing and planned to be demolished and the remainder of the site is currently being used as a waste transfer station to accept recycling, and sort and store materials before they are transported to other processing facilities. While construction of a new MRF was being progressed despite the fire, it is now vital that construction is prioritised to ensure the ACT's recycling can be processed locally and allow the temporary long-haul transport arrangements in place to cease.

The existing MRF will be replaced with a new facility that will provide technological improvements to increase resource recovery, creating higher quality recycled products and reducing the amount of waste ending up in landfill. The new MRF is a central part of the Draft ACT Circular Economy Strategy 2022-25. The circular economy aims to keep resources circulating in our economy for as long as possible, maximising the value of materials and reducing the need to use natural resources.

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the facility will enable a processing capacity of up to 115,000 tonnes per year of mixed recyclables. This capacity would provide for population growth and changing consumer behaviours which are expected to contribute to increases in recoverable materials over time.

Key features of the proposal are included below.

- A receival hall with pre-sort capability to better separate, identify, sort and segregate or bale specific marketable product streams and reduce contaminants.
- Glass crushing and washing facilities to provide better quality crushed glass that can be used in a wider range of products.
- Plastic washing and 'flaking' facilities – the flaking process breaks the washed plastic into small pieces, providing a clean product ready for local markets.
- Improved and expanded baling processes for Container Deposit Scheme materials.
- An upgrade to data collection, management, and analysis systems.
- Wastewater capture and reuse, and stormwater management infrastructure to achieve environmental compliance.

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) scoping document issued for the MRF details the need for the proponent to consult with the community as part of the concept design and preparation of the EIS. The public engagement period took place from April to June 2023. Given the close proximity of the future MRF to the proposed future Food Organics Garden Organics (FOGO) facility, the public engagement phase was carried out for both facilities together to consider community feedback. Feedback on each facility has been documented separately to assist with the EIS process.

Location

The new MRF would be located within the current bounds of the Hume Resource Recovery Estate (HRRE) on Recycling Road in Hume (Block 12, Section 25, see Figure 1.1).

The site is surrounded by industrial facilities including:

- ACT Skip Hire across Recycling Road to the east
- Soft Landing Mattress Recycling located to the south-east, across John Cory Road
- Hume Industrial Estate located to the south and east across the Monaro Highway
- Mugga Lane landfill located approximately 200 metres to the north-west
- proposed FOGO facility located to the east, across John Cory Road.

The footprint of the built area is estimated to be 3.5 hectares (ha) which includes the loading bay, processing area, and carpark. The roadways on-site would be 0.5 ha and the building would be 1.05 ha. The new MRF would be accessed via Recycling Road to the east of the site.



Figure 1.1 Location of the new MRF, Hume Resource Recovery Estate

Engagement Approach

A Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan was developed to identify the objective of engagement, stakeholder groups and engagement methods.

Who we engaged

Key stakeholders located close to the future MRF were identified. They included:

- the local area dominated by low density residential properties to the west of the site
- neighbouring suburbs of Chisholm, Fadden, Farrer, Gilmore, Gowrie, Hume, Isaacs, Jerrabomberra, Macarthur and Tralee
- Hume Business District
- businesses operating on or near Recycling Road, John Cory Road, and Mugga Lane including ACT Skip Hire and Soft Landing Mattress Recycling ACT, Mugga Lane Solar Park, ACT Recycling, Corkhill Bros and the Mugga Lane Resource Management Centre (MLRMC)
- community groups including the Tuggeranong Community Council, Inner South Canberra Community Council, Jerrabomberra Residents Association and the Woden Valley Community Council
- volunteer conservation, landscape management or landcare groups active in the area including the Molonglo Conservation Group.

How we engaged

Consultation for the new MRF started on 24 April and closed on 5 June 2023.

The community and stakeholders were notified through a letterbox drop and a stakeholder email inviting them to community sessions about the proposal. This was supported by a project page on the City Services website and downloadable factsheets and project information.

Feedback on the proposal was encouraged via email or attendance at one of the drop-in sessions.

Letter to residents and businesses

In May 2023, a letter was distributed to around 10,690 residents and businesses located in the suburbs of Chisholm, Fadden, Farrer, Gilmore, Gowrie, Hume, Isaacs, Jerrabomberra, Macarthur and Tralee as well as to other community members who had registered to be kept informed on the proposal.

The purpose of the letter was to:

- provide information about the proposed new MRF and FOGO facility
- inform the community about the start of the EIS process for the facilities
- invite the community to provide feedback on the proposals.

Email to stakeholders

In May 2023 an email was sent to around 140 businesses and community groups to inform them of the project. The stakeholders identified included:

- neighbouring services and businesses
- local community groups
- volunteer conservation, landscape management and landcare groups in the area.

Website information

A joint MRF and FOGO project page was created on the City Services website. The project page provided information on both proposals, contained printable resources including fact sheets on both the facilities as well as fact sheets specific to odour, traffic and noise management, as well as contact details and information regarding the community drop-in sessions. The website also encouraged the community to provide feedback which would inform the draft EIS.

Social media

Content was distributed via ACT Government channels including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. The Facebook post was scheduled on 16 May 2023. It was boosted to surrounding suburbs to ensure maximum reach. It reached an audience of 1,382 with a 7.3% engagement rate, 238 reactions, 53 comments, 18 link clicks and nine shares.

Engagement activities

Community consultation sessions

Four face-to-face consultation sessions were held in May 2023. Across the four sessions, 76 people attended and registered interest in the project.

The community sessions were held across two weeks, with two sessions per week, across four different locations near the proposal sites. The community sessions are outlined below.

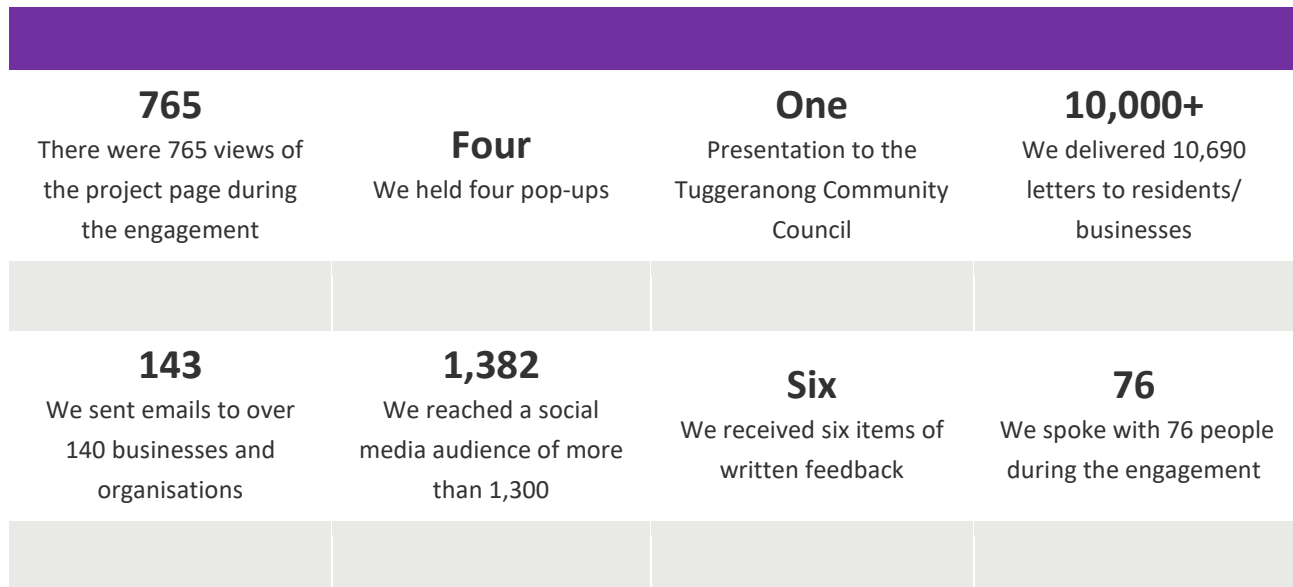
Session 1:	Date: Saturday 20 May 2023 Time: 10:30 am to 12:30 pm Location: Woden Library
Session 2:	Date: Wednesday 24 May 2023 Time: 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm Location: Tuggeranong Library
Session 3:	Date: Saturday 27 May 2023 Time: 10:30 am to 12:30 pm Location: Chisholm Village Shopping Centre
Session 4:	Date: Wednesday 31 May 2023 Time: 10:30 am to 12:30 pm Location: Mawson Southlands Shopping Centre

The purpose of the sessions was to allow the community to:

- understand the proposal
- ask questions and discuss issues and their concerns in the more detail
- provide feedback to inform the development of the EIS.

To support the consultation sessions, six A0 sized posters were prepared. In addition, hard copies of the project fact sheets were provided to attendees.

Engagement figures



What we heard

Stakeholders and community members expressed support for the new MRF acknowledging its role as a key piece of recycling infrastructure for the Territory.

Concerns were raised about traffic, construction and noise impacts with development and operation as well as the potential for odour and litter associated with the nature of the proposal.

The table below outlines the written comments received during the engagement period and the ACT Government response.

Topic	Issue raised	ACT Government response
Support for the project	Community supported the proposed new MRF and the rebuilding of the MRF on the existing site.	The new MRF is proposed to be located on the same site as the existing facility on Recycling Road within the Hume Resource Recovery Estate (Block 12, Section 25).
	Community raised that re-establishing recycling processing in the ACT is critical to recovering the confidence of Canberrans to put their valuable waste materials into the appropriate bins.	The new MRF will allow recycling generated by the community in the ACT to be processed locally.
	Community was happy the proposed new MRF would have an increased capacity than the previous MRF to meet future needs.	It will be designed to have an increased processing capacity of up to approximately 115,000 tonnes per year. The previous MRF was receiving approximately 65,000 tonnes per year.
Traffic and development	Concerns were raised over the development of Southern Memorial Park and capacity of Mugga Lane and Long Gully Road.	The completed draft EIS will include a Traffic Impact Assessment which will provide further detailed information regarding traffic and any required mitigation measures. The specific technical studies will be available with the draft EIS for community comment whilst on public exhibition. A Traffic Impact Assessment will also be prepared as part of the development application process for the Southern Memorial Park. The ACT Government will continue to monitor traffic flows and consider future road upgrades to manage any additional truck movements.
	Concerns were raised about the interaction with Southern Memorial Park and compatibility of development.	Cemeteries and crematoria require specific land zoning and, as they can never be moved, their location should be carefully considered. A number of locations were investigated as part of the development of the 2012 draft masterplan and a site off Long Gully Road and Mugga Lane was found to be most appropriate due to its size, zoning, access and proximity to existing facilities. This was supported by community consultation undertaken in 2009. The Southern Memorial Park is located well to the north of the current Mugga Lane landfill site and is protected by a large grassed south facing mound. The design also includes significant landscaping to screen the site. Site investigations found prevailing winds are oriented away from Southern Memorial Park.
	Highlighted how the site has excellent access to arterial roads and is not located near to any existing businesses or residences which would be unreasonably impacted by the facilities.	The Traffic Impact Assessment will consider the operational impact of the MRF and FOGO facility. The Traffic Impact Assessment is under preparation and will be included in the draft EIS.
Circular economy	Community raised support of the facility supporting a circular economy.	A new facility with modern technology will improve the separation and processing of recycling streams such as paper, glass and plastic. This will increase resource recovery, creating higher quality recycled products and reducing the amount of waste ending up in landfill. The new MRF is a central part of the draft ACT Circular Economy Strategy 2022-25. The circular economy aims to keep resources circulating in our economy for as long as possible, maximising the value of materials and reducing the need to use natural resources.

Topic	Issue raised	ACT Government response
	<p>Suggestion to increase circular economy opportunities through additional avenues such as waste to energy, with potential for that to power the facilities, and biofuel production, with potential to fuel the trucks which collect the waste.</p>	<p>There are no plans to construct a waste-to-energy facility in the ACT. The thermal treatment of waste is prohibited under the ACT Waste-to-Energy Policy 2020-25, except for facilities already in place prior to the policy. The policy released publicly in March 2020 stated that waste reduction, reuse and recycling of materials was the primary focus in the ACT.</p> <p>A number of additional circular economy measures will be considered and investigated in the design development and construction planning for the new facility. The proposed educational facility that would form part of the proposal is intended to be fitted out with eco-friendly materials where practicable to support circular economy development. Substitution of less emission intense fuels will also be considered such as the use of electric/hydrogen plant and vehicles.</p>
	<p>Suggestion that glass should be sorted by colour and fed back into glass product as an alternative to glass being recycled into trench filler.</p>	<p>The new MRF may incorporate secondary processing such as glass washing and cutting and plastic washing to be turned into new recycled products. This detail will be further investigated during the detailed design phase and made available as part of the development application phase.</p>
	<p>Suggestion for plastics to be sorted by colour and quality and recycled to create a circular economy, minimising the production of virgin plastics.</p>	<p>The new MRF may incorporate secondary processing of plastics thereby contributing to the circular economy. This detail will be further investigated during the detailed design phase and made available as part of the development application phase.</p>
	<p>Suggestion to work with local enterprises to adjoin processing facilities for complex materials such as metals, glass, concrete, textile, and minerals.</p>	<p>The ACT Government is in the process of investigating options to progress the ACT's circular economy to design out waste and keep materials in use at their highest value. As part of this body of work, we will investigate opportunities to improve product stewardship for various products.</p> <p>The ACT Government has also been supporting opportunities to reduce textile waste to landfill in the ACT. ACT NoWaste is supporting a charity bin trial at the Hume Resource Management Centre. The trial is helping to redirect textiles from unnecessarily going to landfill and allow Koomarri to support jobs for people who have an intellectual disability. Koomarri runs a social enterprise called "cut cloth", which turns waste textiles that are not fit for sale into rags that are sold to businesses in the local region.</p>
	<p>Suggestion that the ACT Government should invest further in developing a circular economy for Canberra. This should include advocating at the national level for compulsory stewardship schemes across all product categories, and mandatory recycled content targets. These are essential for driving producer responsibility, funding to invest in recovery and processing, and markets for recovered materials.</p>	<p>The new MRF is a central part of the Draft ACT Circular Economy Strategy 2022-25. The circular economy aims to keep resources circulating in our economy for as long as possible, maximising the value of materials and reducing the need to use natural resources. Ultimately, the new MRF will help the ACT Government achieve its goal of net zero emissions by 2045.</p>

Topic	Issue raised	ACT Government response
	<p>Suggestion for investments in research collaborations, such as SMaRT@UNSW and the CSIRO to develop solutions for complex wastes such as disposable coffee capsules, rubber tyres, electronics, medical wastes, and mattresses.</p> <p>Suggestion for Government to support transfer of materials through mapping these processes, inputs, and outputs across the ACT via an online platform that enables organisations to connect.</p> <p>Suggestion for Government to support transfer of materials through removing regulatory barriers to higher value uses (e.g. Goterra's insects could become protein for human consumption).</p> <p>Suggestion that the proposal should also include collection and processing of soft plastics, given the failure of REDcycle.</p>	<p>The ACT Government is in the process of investigating options to progress circular economy in the ACT to design out waste and keep materials in use at their highest value. As part of this body of work, we will investigate opportunities to improve product stewardship for various products.</p>
	<p>Suggestion for the building of MRF to reflect a world best practice standard.</p>	<p>Noted. The proposal would provide technological improvements to facilitate greater resource recovery and will be one of the most recent MRFs built in Australia with modern technology.</p>
	<p>Highlighted the greater the sorting capacity and technological capabilities of the facility, the higher quality the recovered materials will be, ensuring that these materials have a high market value which will help fund the facility.</p>	<p>The proposal would provide technological improvements to facilitate greater resource recovery by increasing the quality of recycled materials and reducing the amount of non-recyclable residual waste generated that is currently sent to landfill. The upgraded facility is intended to improve the quality and marketability of paper and mixed cardboard, mixed plastics and glass.</p>
Community education	<p>Suggestion that community education must shift from thinking “waste management” to “circular economy”.</p>	<p>In October 2022 the ACT Government released its first draft ACT Circular Economy Strategy. The Strategy provides the initial steps towards a more circular economy through to 2025. It outlines a common language and vision to bring the ACT Government, industry, business and the community together to build a circular economy that supports a prosperous and sustainable Canberra.</p> <p>The Strategy will inform the development of a circular economy action plan and the development of new circular economy legislation for the ACT. As this is the first circular economy strategy for the ACT, it sets the high-level ambition to build on previous work to drive the initial steps towards a more circular economy through to 2025, at which point the Strategy will be reviewed and updated. The circular economy will continue to mature and expand over time as the concept becomes embedded and our understanding of the concept - and its possibilities - grows. Community education is an integral part of the success of the Circular Economy Strategy and is a key focus for the ACT Government in the roll-out of the Strategy and its associated action plan.</p>
	<p>Suggestion that the new facilities must be supported by significant investment in community education to minimise</p>	<p>The ACT Government through ACT NoWaste invests significantly in community education and this will continue.</p>

Topic	Issue raised	ACT Government response
	<p>contamination of both comingled recycling and FOGO collected from households.</p> <p>Concern that a lack of education leads to high contamination rates which leads to poor quality products which cannot be sold, leading in turn to failure of economic viability of the facilities. Money spent on education is well spent.</p> <p>Suggestion that community education could be delivered in partnership with enterprises such as Capital Scraps, the Canberra Environment Centre and SEE-Change. This education should commence well ahead of completion of the facility and the start of scaled-up collections.</p>	
Fire prevention	Concerns were raised about what is being done to ensure future fires can be prevented or mitigated.	<p>The proposed new MRF will have modern firefighting detection and fire suppression technologies including hydrants, ring mains, and an internal automatic fire sprinkler system.</p> <p>The design of the facility would be in accordance with the objectives of the relevant fire safety guidelines including the <i>Fire safety in waste management facilities 2022</i> published by Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (Australian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council, 2022) and the current edition of the National Construction Code (Australian Building Codes Board, 2022).</p> <p>In addition, emergency management plans will be prepared prior to construction, operation, and occupancy of the facility in line with the Fire Safety Guidelines for Fire Safety in Waste Facilities.</p> <p>These management systems will help prevent fires from occurring on that scale in the future.</p>
Water	Concern that water flows across the site must be managed to avoid the run-off of potential toxins and particulates into the waterways.	<p>In developing the EIS and the technical studies, best-practice methods were identified in assessing stormwater quality impacts and an appropriate treatment strategy was developed in response. Water quality modelling undertaken for the proposal confirms that the proposed treatment strategy would achieve the requirements of the ACT Water-sensitive Urban Design Code (ACT Government, 2017) and meet ACT regulations for water quality.</p> <p>Before the commencement of MRF operations, a detailed operational management plan will be developed and updated annually.</p> <p>The proposal site is not significantly impacted by flood flows, with flood waters generally confined to the north-western side of the site. Further run-on from other sites is not notable.</p>

Topic	Issue raised	ACT Government response
	Because of the topography of the area the only way to avoid, minimise and mitigate adverse impacts is to relocate the proposed facilities.	<p>The MRF is proposed to be located at a level equal to, or higher than, the 1 in 100 Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) flood level of nearby waterways. Stormwater from local catchments is proposed to be diverted around the site, utilising existing drainage channels and infrastructure.</p> <p>Hydraulic modelling has been undertaken to inform the design and ensure that the proposed facility pad level and location would not cause flooding to extend to any adjacent landholdings or result in any notable impacts on downstream waterways. These studies will be available with the draft EIS when it is on public exhibitions.</p>
Odour	Concerns were raised about the odour from the existing MLRMC.	<p>The ACT Government understands the neighbouring communities have experienced ongoing odour issues from the existing MLRMC.</p> <p>An Air Quality Impact Assessment is currently underway for the proposal and will form part of the draft EIS.</p> <p>While some proposed activities have potential for low levels of odour emissions, the new MRF will be a fully enclosed building and therefore is not expected to result in any odour impacts in the surrounding area.</p> <p>The ACT Government will continue to monitor this issue.</p>
Legislation/regulation	Has the EPBC Act been considered.	<p>The EPBC Act is the Australian Government's primary legislation for the protection of matters of national environmental significance (MNES). It provides a legal framework to protect and manage nationally and internationally important flora, fauna, ecological communities, and heritage places.</p> <p>Heritage and ecological assessments undertaken as part of the draft EIS have confirmed the proposal is not expected to have impacts to any MNES.</p>
Procurement process	Concerns were raised that the current proposed procurement method for a 'single contractor of substance' may not provide the best outcome for the environment or local businesses as small and medium-sized businesses may not be considered. Local businesses will not tender or provide feedback on the Early Tender Notification (ETN) as a result.	The project is being expedited by undertaking a single stage tender to ensure the facility is built as soon as possible. The pre-tender notice released in May 2023 stated a preference for 'single contractor of substance' and does not preclude other types of entities in participating the tender process.
	Concerns were raised about the ETN - the proposed builder must be accredited under the Australian Government Building and Construction WHS Accreditation Scheme and that this will remove the opportunity for many ACT businesses despite them carrying an ACT Government WHS Accreditation.	This is a requirement of the Australian Government funding contribution and is not considered onerous to obtain for this project.
	Highlighted they understand the rationale behind the speed with which the Government intends to develop these facilities, but raised concern this haste will compromise potential benefits to	In December 2022 the MRF in Hume was destroyed by fire. Since the fire, the ACT Government has been transporting the ACT's recycling material to three materials recovery facilities in Western Sydney and one in Victoria for processing.

Topic	Issue raised	ACT Government response
	the ACT. Suggestion to re-think the approach, even if it is more difficult and takes 6-12 months longer. Suggestion to use that time to consider how more local businesses can be involved and how the very latest and emerging waste management technology can be incorporated.	<p>Approximately 229 tonnes per day is being transported, which is an average of nine trucks per day. This is unsustainable in the long term.</p> <p>The new MRF is being delivered as a priority and designed to have an increased processing capacity of up to approximately 115,000 tonnes per year. Initial plans were to substitute the existing MRF with new technology and therefore the early design work has to date focused on new and emerging waste management technologies. This will continue to be a feature of the design work as well as a consideration for the operator once the facility is up and running. Waste management technology is always evolving and the ACT will continue to look for ways to improve waste management as part of the Circular Economy Strategy.</p>
Waste collection trucks	Suggestion that the Government should also ensure that collection trucks are restricted in size to safely navigate all Canberra streets without compromising mature trees and planning for active travel.	<p>Currently the Territory is tendering for a Household Waste Collection Service. The vehicle types used will be detailed through that process.</p> <p>Maintaining mature trees and planning for active travel remain important priorities for the Territory.</p>
Consultation session locations	Feedback provided to the project team regarding confusion into the reasoning behind the selection of times, dates, and locations for the community information sessions.	Two additional community consultation sessions were added at Chisholm Village Shopping Centre and Mawson Southlands Shopping Centre following community feedback.