

In answering the questions below, I note that some of the questions are posed to present the EPA in a positive manner. I am a member of Stop The Tip Inc and have had a number of meetings with officials from both the EPA and Sustainability Victoria going back to July 2014. It is fair to say that there has been little or no action taken to ensure our community has the right to breathe clean fresh air. Our group have met with Melton council we have also met with several state Politian's to discuss the issue relating to odour and litter releases from the Ravenhall landfill by both Transpacific Cleanaway (TPI) and before them Boral. It's Sunday the 11th of October and the stench coming from the landfill this morning was horrific, my wife reported the odour and has a reference number for the call made to the EPA call centre. At least EPA officers can no longer blame the stench coming from the tip on Pinegro as this business is no longer operating at the site.

1. What do you think are the key environmental challenges which will impact the EPA in the future?

I'm not sure if the EPA has the knowledge or skill to properly protect the environment and by extension the community. There is a lot of information relating to the breakdown of landfill liners on the internet, we have also seen rubbish dumped at the tip being run over by large earthmoving equipment that can puncture the liner. There are basic household items that will also break down the liner over time. The Ravenhall landfill liners base is approximately 2 metres above a large aquifer. The community have not been presented with any details relating to water testing coming from the water system.

2. What aspects of the EPA's work do you value and wish to preserve in the future?

Ringling a call centre is a good first step in the reporting process however; being called back by EPA officers and told that the stench is not coming from the landfill is an insult to our intelligence. I have had an officer at my front door gagging on the odour coming from the tip, she did agree that the odour was from the landfill its very hard not to agree when it smells like rotten egg or hydrogen sulfide.

3. How can the EPA effectively work in partnership with other government agencies to meet the environmental challenges of the future?
4. How can the EPA's role in safeguarding the community against the health impacts of pollution be clarified or strengthened?

I am amazed when talking EPA officials about the burden of proof required for prosecution. There is **only 1 LANDFILL located in the area** and yet the strong hydrogen sulfide and sour rotting garbage smell cannot be identified as coming from the tip. The following licence conditions are consistently being breached:

- Amenity LI_A1 offensive odour must not be discharged beyond the boundaries of the premises.
- Amenity LI_A4 nuisance airborne particles must not be discharged beyond the boundaries of the premises.
- Waste management LI_WM3 you must ensure that litter is not deposited beyond the boundaries of the premises.

5. How could statutory frameworks more effectively prevent future environmental risks and land use conflicts?

The Planning and Environment Act 1987 should have been used to develop the current SWRRIP. The SWRRIP is flawed because it has not considered "what matters must a responsible authority consider?" as outlined in **section 60** of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. In particular, Part (e) states "any significant effects which the responsible authority considers the use or development may have on the environment or which the responsible authority considers the environment may have on the use or development".

It also states in part 1 (a), before deciding on an application, the responsible authority, if the circumstances appear to so require, may consider, (a) Any significant social and economic effects of the use or development for which the

application is made. Surely, the TPI/Boral landfill at Ravenhall, which is the largest landfill in Melbourne, must fit into this category. This is arguably the largest growth corridor in Melbourne with recent announcements of residential estates at Rockbank 50,000 people, a proposed estate at Mt Atkinson and new residential estates to the south of the landfill. Both the estates located to the south and the Mt Atkinson estate will have a view of the new landfill cells being prepared by TPI.

6. What role should the EPA play in emergency management?
7. How can the EPA better identify and, where necessary, address problems that are the result of past activity?

Mr Finegan informed the Stop the Tip members at a meeting in March of this year that he only had a staff of 30 people and that at any one time there might only be two officers to review odour complaints in Victoria. A number of STTC members found this statement unacceptable coming from the person who is responsible for protecting the Victorian community. I would suggest that a review of numbers based on this statement is essential. If the EPA are to be taken seriously there needs to be a ramped approach to fines on business breaching licence conditions, up to and including losing the right to operate landfills.

8. What can the EPA do to avoid potential future problems?

Much has been written in EPA documentation about community consultation, I don't think people within this organisation have the first idea about what this means. Community consultation does not mean going to council who do not represent the greater community. It does not mean including business that stand to make many millions of dollars in profit by implementing shoddy practices who place the environment and community at risk. My wife and two other members of STT attended a Waste Expo on the 7/10/2015 and reported that the consultation process had taken almost 2 years. Stan Krpan from Sustainability Victoria who discussed this was the very person we spoke to at the meeting in July 2014 along with Jenny Pickles and Tim Eaton from the EPA. **I say again what consultation.**

9. What role should the EPA play in improving environmental outcomes beyond those necessary to safeguard human health?

There is a consistent theme in what I have written in this submission and that is for the EPA to do the job the community expect of this organisation. Business must be made accountable when they impact on the community in a negative way. The EPA needs to be given greater power of enforcement that is consistent with holding polluters to account. In particular when there are breaches in licences obligations. There are 50 toxic substances reported to the National Pollution Inventory by TPI at the Ravenhall landfill. We have been informed that a 14 million litre leachate pond is going onto this site. How will this impact on the community? Why is there no risk assessment showing the extent of the damage done by this upgrade to the environment and the community? As a community we will not accept what the EPA or business tell us, they have been less than honest in the past. Our community see the EPA as a part owner in the landfill business through the levy collected for each tonne of rubbish dumped at the site.

10. What role should the EPA play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions?
11. How do you see environmental justice being applied to the work of the EPA?

What a joke.

12. What can we adopt from other regulators and regulatory models to implement best-practice approaches and ensure that the EPA can rise to key future challenges?

The term world's best practice is often used by the EPA and business when talking about landfill operations. We are so far behind the rest of the world in the way we treat garbage it's laughable. Waste to Energy plants have been in existence for over 100 years, they are located across the globe. There are two under construction in Western Australia, but here we are in Victoria filling holes in the ground with no plans to stop this practice for at least another 35 years according to the latest SWRRIP.