

Climate Action Merri-bek Waste Incineration Awareness Report

October 2026



Residents Horrified, Engaged and Aghast Once They Learn Victoria's Dirty Secret!

Summary

Climate action Merri-bek surveyed residents regarding the proposed waste incinerators and had a terrific response of 412 people.

We found overwhelming objections to the proposed incinerators:

- Only 7% of people supported the idea of waste incinerators while 88% were not in support.
- The major concerns about the proposals were Air Pollution, Health Impacts, Water Contamination and Climate Impacts
- Over $\frac{3}{4}$ of respondents rejected government plans to permit the waste incinerators.
- Residents are in the dark about the proposed waste incinerators with the vast majority of respondents not knowing about the waste incinerator proposals before undertaking the survey



Climate Action Merri-bek
Surveying at the Fawkner
Festa September 2026

Introduction

Climate Action Merri-bek (CAM) has been actively engaged with the issue of waste incineration over last two and a half years since Cleanaway proposed a Waste to Energy plant at nearby developing northern suburbs (within 15 km of Merri-bek, in the catchment of the Merri Creek). There are now a number of waste incinerators being proposed in Victoria with two quite close (within 15 km) to Merri-bek. While we have worked on inquiries and supported No Northern Incinerator Wollert at events in order to progress our own campaign we wanted to know what locals here know and think about the proposed incinerators. We decided to survey locals to find out.

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Methods

We designed a simple 6 question survey using Survey Monkey. We launched the survey at the Climate Action Merri-bek 2026 Annual General Meeting. We used hand drawn graphics to create eye catching fliers and social media tiles



*Waste Incinerator Survey Launch
Climate Action Merri-bek 2026 AGM*

We circulated the survey via social media: the CAM Facebook page and blog posts, intensive leafleting at train stations along the Upfield line, at Markets and the Fawkner Festa.



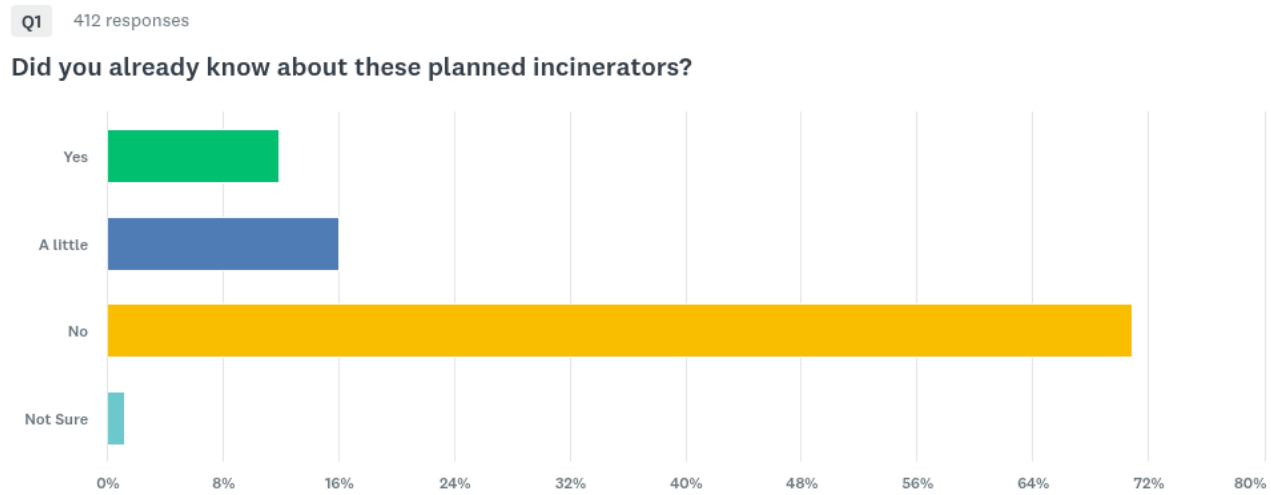
The questions we asked were:

- 1) Did you already know about these planned incinerators?
- 2) How would you describe your response to hearing about them?
- 3) What aspects of these incinerator plans concerns you the most?
- 4) Do you support the Victorian government's plans to permit these incinerators?
- 5) Which Lower House District for the State Election do you live in?
- 6) What questions might you have for your candidates in the upcoming election?

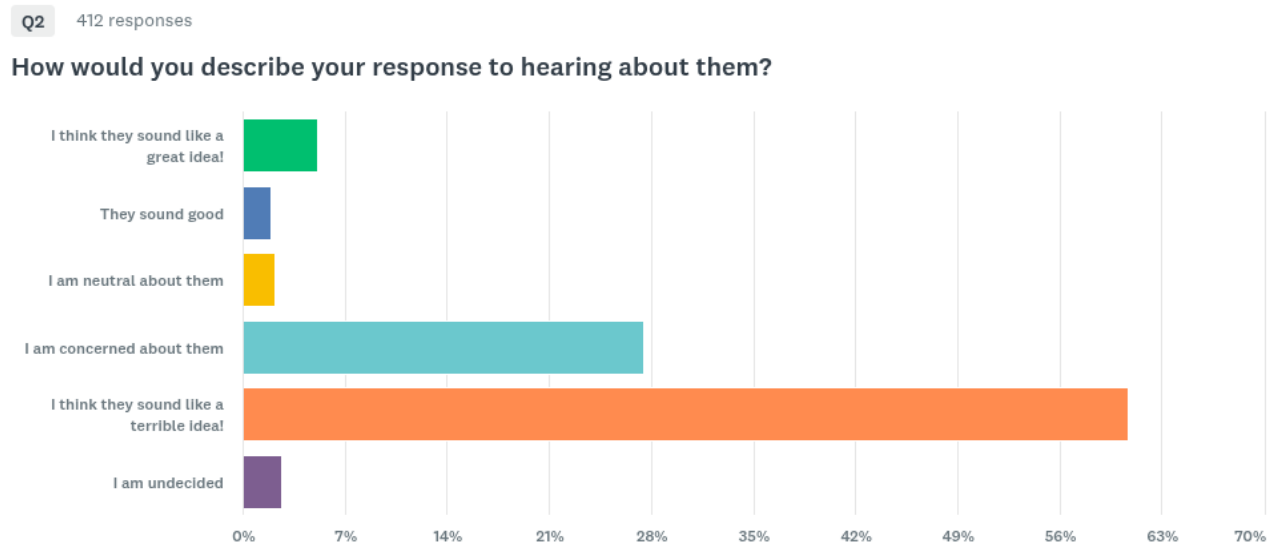
Most questions had options to choose from that covered the range of possible answers, with a text box for people to make any comment that they wanted.

Results

People engaged in the survey, even though they in the main had not heard of the Waste Incinerator issue before. We received a terrific response with 412 completed surveys. There were noticeable increases in responses received on the days we leafleted.



Most people (71%) had not heard about the planned incinerators.

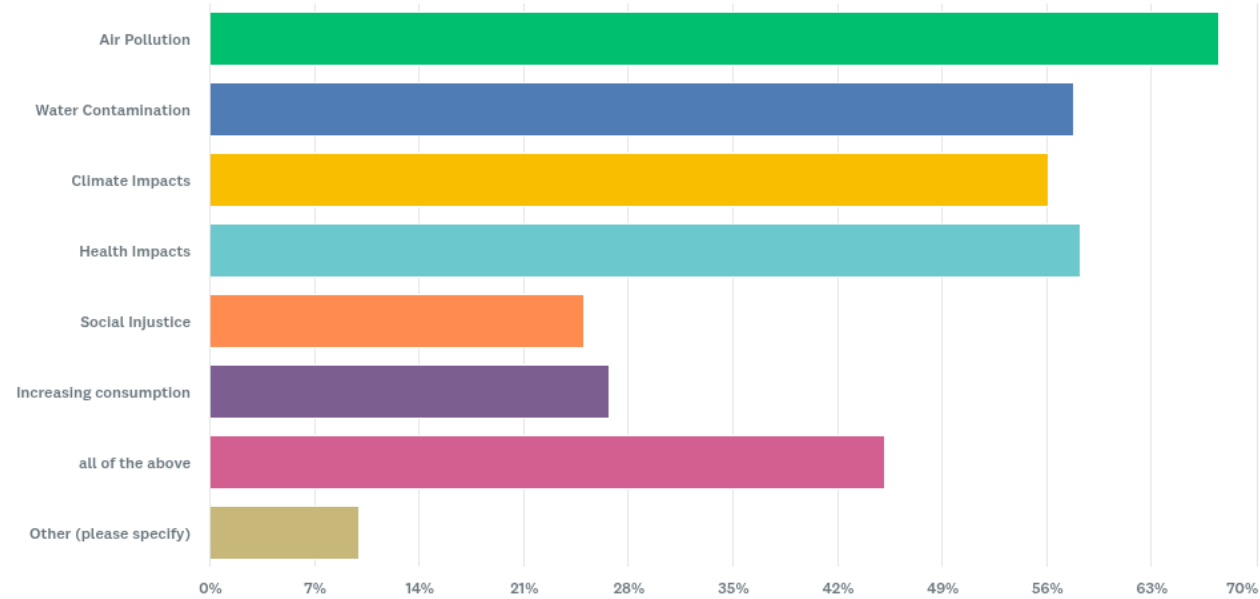


Eight out of nine people (88%) were concerned about or thought they sounded terrible.

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Q3 412 responses

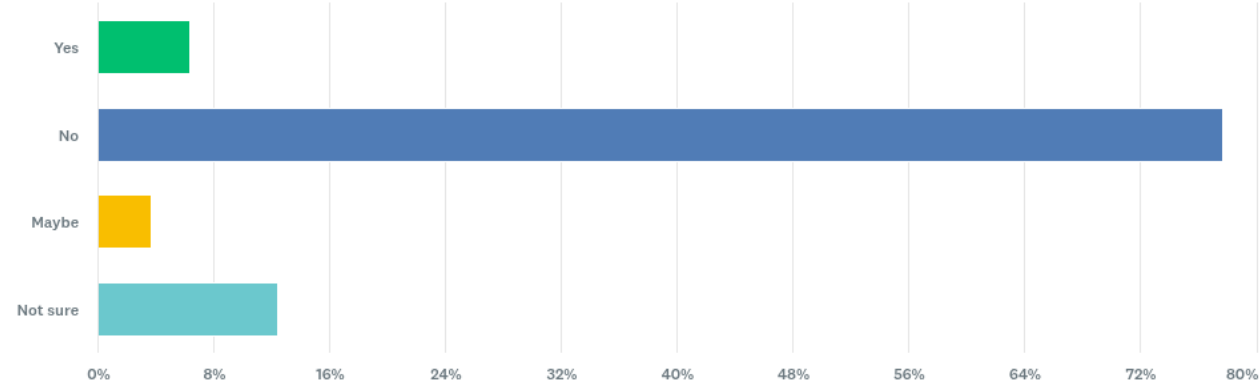
What aspects of these incinerator plans concerns you the most? Please mark all that apply.



There were many reasons people were concerned about these waste incinerators. 2 in 3 respondents (67.5%) were concerned about Air pollution. More than half were concerned about health impacts (58.2%), water contamination (57.8%) and climate impacts (56.1%).

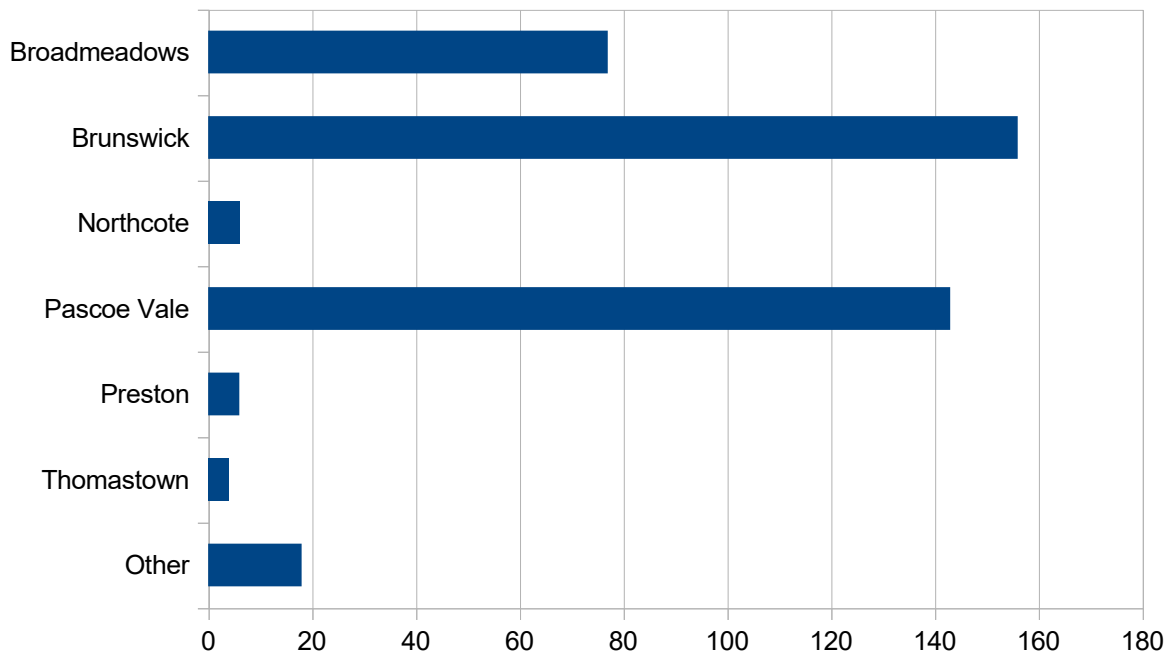
Q4 412 responses

Do you support the Victorian government’s plans to permit these incinerators?



More than 3 in 4 people (77.7%) did not support the Victorian Governments plan to permit these incinerators.

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We targeted Merri-bek and the State districts that cover Merri-bek. 77 people from the district of Broadmeadows, 156 from the district of Brunswick and 143 from the district of Pascoe Vale completed the survey. There were a few respondents from neighbouring districts and from other areas of the state.

Q6 We asked what questions people might want to ask candidates in the upcoming election.

We got 153 answers.

This answer will be further analysed with review of themes. Most questions were specific incinerator and waste related questions. There were also many general questions about climate action, gas extraction, infrastructure such as data centres, housing, roads, education facilities and public transport.

Discussion

There were noticeable peaks in completion of surveys on the days that we leafleted a train station. Even though most people had not heard much or anything about these facilities, they took the time to complete a survey.

Most people had not heard about the planned incinerators, more had concerns about them or thought they were a terrible idea. There was a range of concerns about the impacts of these planned facilities. Respondents were not supportive of plans to permit waste incinerator facilities.

Questions asked by respondents will be used to develop questions to be put to candidates at upcoming candidate forums.

Appendix Individual Response Comments and Candidate Questions

Q2 How would you describe your response to hearing about them? - Please add your own comments
Concern about air quality & proximity to housing etc.
Should never be aloud we are destroying our children's future
This will obviously poison the community and the environment. It would criminally negligent to go ahead with this dangerous and stupid plan.
I had a tour of one in central London 26 years ago and thought it was great
I'm very concerned about the environmental impact of this waste management technique and am wondering about less harmful alternatives
Why do we get all nastiest in North/ West. In addition to larger Tip in the world, all the prisons and now incinerators and Data centres:
We need to deal with our waste, why not do it locally
France is getting rid of theirs because of the pollution
It's typical of the fantasy solutions our supposed leaders want to adopt - instead of facing reality, let's burn the evidence!
As long as it is done like in Japan I am ok wothit
It sounds better than landfill, which is the only realistic short-term alternative.
I'm not really sure what they are
I don't know enough but from what I heard
How close to local primary schools, young children and families ?
Controlled pollution in the air versus uncontrolled pollution of the water and soil. Singapore has done it, why can't we
WTF
Where else can we put the rubbish? Is there a better alternative to be proposed?
These incinerators generate multiple toxins and poison life around for many kilometers. We need to care for our soils and air quality, we need to protect the health of vulnerable people and other species and we need to reduce waste.
I don't know enough so I'm concerned
The are multiple considerations. Ultimately circular economy principles should be the first step in addressing our waste. Conversion of waste to energy for waste that would otherwise go to land fill and increase demand on land use is positive. But providing the EPA with the transparent regular emissions reporting, appropriate legislative and enforcement tools coupled with pollution thresholds that give the public confidence in these facilities is critical.
I like the idea of waste reduction and looking at ways to minimise our landfill but not at the liberty of further pollution!
Need another solution
Waste to energy is necessary for lower order recycling and is consistent with the broader vision of a circular economy
I live next to the proposed incinerator
Merri-bek is a very environmentally conscious area and we do not want anything like this here, the council (and government) should be making sure that every decision going forward be the most sustainable and have a positive environmental impact

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Populations around the world are still growing. The human race creates a ridiculous amount of rubbish. There is only so much space on the Earth for landfill. Sadly these are all we have now. We seriously need to change our ways.
what the fuck!! hell no
They are banned in metro NSW and Canberra for a reason. Air pollution is impossible to contain.
I can't believe this would be even be considered as a viable solution!
There's no better way to dispose of material which cannot economically be recycled.
I hope they have scrubbers to remove any toxic compounds and they test emitted gases regularly.
The Paris Waste incinerator caused the ban on eating backyard eggs, I think that "world class tech" says it all
I'd like to know more about who is proposing it and a link to the website of whoever would build and manage it so I can do my own research.
I'm very concerned about the pollution and toxic it will which is harmful for people and planet . I recommend to find other solutions which is not affected by the community.
Good initiative but should be outside of city
I've heard about them and they sound like a potential solution for waste but absolutely not in the suburbs of Melbourne. I don't know enough. Would prefer solutions to reduce waste
You haven't provided any sources, do I just take your word for it?
I would like to know why and what are the alternatives
Greener & more environment conscious planning should be the primary focus of Australia
What are better alternatives for dealing with waste?
Reduce waste to landfill protecting our water table and environment
I think it's moving humanity further back than it already has been
Popution of air. Is there another way to get rid of plastics?
Concerned but I have not heard the arguments in favour of the plans
I'm confused why they are banned in other states due to their toxicity of the enviroment but welcomed in our environment
Please don't build these. It's a health risk. As a person with a disability, the fumes will affect my ability to breath.
I am very concerned about pollution and the impact on environmental and human health as well as livability. We already experience various disgusting stenchs in fawkner from industrial sources
Yap
Omg please don't start this it's just HORRID FIND ANOTHER SOLUTION
Dont want my house to stink like trash
Burning rubbish is bad
When I first heard about the incinerators I thought it might be a reasonable idea. The more I learnt I became opposed on environmental, social and technical grounds
I completed a research project at RMIT on the proposed facility in Wollert
2 birds, one stone. Reduce landfill, create low cost energy
Waste incinerators have proven to be a huge benefit in waste management, energy production, and reducing landfills. In other countries landfills have even been outlawed and closed down as a result.
I am not happy with this plan, do not permit

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Will create many more problems than they solve. Very short-sighted by government.
Beyond terrible. Catastrophic!
Are they going to be polluting as you say or are they going to filter the fumes before they are released in the atmosphere like they do with the incinerators in Europe. The tips are running out of space. tge city is expanding. clearly alternatives near where we are. are needed. I suggest u work with proposals being made rather than be so negative and have no economical and viable alternative in mind.
Need more informed information.
I am particularly concerned about the scheme that community would have to pay if not enough rubbish is produced! Pure evil
The impacts of air pollution are often not seen for years, and by the time people start caring is because they or their loved ones have fallen sick
I would like to understand more
Disappointed we are going backwards in waste processing rather than holding the multi national company's to account for producing this plastic. I want to see a plastic levy on all plastic products
I would need to do research on the process of incineration and the severity of proposed polution. On paper it sounds terrible, but ill give them the benefit of the doubt that they would do the process well.
Burning plastics = dioxins = carcinogens
Literally the last thing our communities & the fragile environment needs!
I am concerned about because I do not know the design of the incinerator and it's emissions
Knew nothing about them until just then but it sounds very scary especially if they are banned interstate
Really upset to know that these plans are in place and not actively communicated with the Merribek community. It shouldn't be the responsibility of individuals passionate about climate action to communicate this news, for plans that will impact us all.
Unless they're built like the Japanese wte plants where they have strict emission regulations I can see them being highly damaging to the local communities.
Not good for environment
waste obviously needs to be dealt with but in a way that doesn't harm the environment
Creating local air pollution is a ridiculous solution
I am shocked that they would be considered anywhere, let alone where thousands of people live and the surrounding impact to the millions more across Melbourne is horrible. Follow NSW and Canberra and ban them
I don't think its a good idea but I do wonder what the solution is for the waste if this doesn't happen. Are we fixing one problem to create another? Again, still don't think its a good idea.
I'm utterly disgusted that poisoning the public is considered an appropriate solution. It's tantamount to treason in my eyes.
More public discourse is required concerning climate and health risks.
I am disgusted that plans for this are even being considered. It is a major step backwards and we deserve clean air
If they are banned in Canberra and metro NSW why are they allowed here?
How disgusting. Absolutely no!
Burning waste is not a solution. Change packaging. Develop recycling. Educate. Do not

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burn
This is a terrible plan, to be so close to residents and also so environmentally irresponsible
Our societies will continue to produce waste. This waste can be reduced in two ways. First way, don't make it. Second way, reduction of making mountains of rubbishs (see examples in Indonesia) that give slow uncontrolable toxin release is incineration with significant toxin control. con
Please find some scientifically better ways to remove waste
The waste issues we face are already not being addressed and this is a worldwide problem. Incinerators have been touted as a less polluting option to landfill and the issues that come with that. I would like to see evidence based research on whether this is the better alternative waste management solution compared with other alternatives. I believe this is being done in Europe and the emissions may be less. The location is important as we don't want a negative impact on waterways, wildlife and humans.
They have been phased out in many other countries after long term use
incinerators post an unacceptable risk to public health and the environment



Hand drawn posters encouraging people to complete the survey at train stations

Q6 What questions might you have for your candidates in the upcoming election?
What will you do to raise awareness of the above proposal and what will be done to stop it?
How can we stop them
Will you halt the proposed waste incinerators? Will you actively plan for a circular economy?
What's your policy on waste incinerators ?
How are you going to deal with misinformed groups like this? Trying to stop a great Eco project
What measures will you support to reduce waste entering the system, e.g. reducing overall consumption within the state by funding Libraries of Things and introducing legislation that addresses waste caused by retail and food sales? Supporting repair, incentives on recycled, repairable and modular products? Further action to rapidly phase out single use plastics?
Labor is already in bed with Merri-Bek Council I don't trust either.

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Why we are so neglected and why are our representatives so accepting of these standards
"Immigration reduction, crime reduction, and corruption strategies
Better laws to lock up climate protesters?"
How will you advocate to stop this for Merri-bek residents
Why are the Northern suburbs the dumping grounds for this type of industry? Does our health and wellbeing matter less than those that live elsewhere?
France has proceeded to shut down its incinerators, why would we now start them up?
"Whether they will support a ban on these incinerators?"
Whether they support the Global Plastics treaty and will advocate to federal government for the treaty?
Whether they accept that we need to move beyond GDP as a measure of wellbeing and start using health of people and planet?"
What research has been done to justify these incinerators? Which companies will profit from them?
When are you going to pay down our debt
If waste shouldn't be incinerated, then is there a place we can store it where it won't leak to the surrounding environment? And would such a place be suitable for nuclear waste?
Why are we burning plastic?
heavy push to fix frequency on public transport
"Will Real-Time Proof of emissions levels be required of approved?"
Will anh council recommend conditions be implemented if provide in any state approval?
Will councils decision to reject be accepted by the state?"
Any alternative?
What are they benefiting from doing this
No questions from me. My family and I are 100% voting for Anthony Cianflone.
"Opposing genocide and the sale of arms to Israel in Palestine.
Urgent care centres having more than 1 Doctor in them (Coburg).
Absolutely no AI data centres.
More community local business within suburbs and food truck vendors for farmers and night markets instead of multinational global real estate corporations (McDonalds)"
What standards are we putting up to control and manage the pollution of different types
What makes you think installing these and burning so close to residential areas is ok for MerriBek when they are banned in other areas of the country due to the health and environment risks?
Is incineration your party (or individual) preferred policy to deal with waste?
What plans are going to be put in place for fighting the youth crime specially the fire bombings house breakins and car theft.
What is their justification and logic behind this decision and permits?
Please explain this!
I would like to know from each candidate if they will stand up and against these incinerators.
If candidates do not support higher density of housing (e.g. Activity Centres) where do they plan to put the housing?
How could you possibly think this is a good idea in a council area that loves and enjoys its natural spaces? Find a better solution and put pressure on the government for less harmful waste management. Make Cole's and Woolworth partially pay for the solution too.
What are you going to do to protect the health of our community from the impacts of climate change & air pollution?
Consider environmental impact

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Are you planning on supporting the waste to energy incinerators?
Do you support incineration
"What are you doing to reduce our environmental impact?
Are you governing based on what the people want or how much lobbyists pay you?
Do you care about the health and welfare of your constituents and if so what are you doing to reduce pollution in air, water and soil?"
What is your alternatives to reduce and process waste?
What are you going to do to drastically reduce our (increasing) plastic use
"When will we get better train and bus services?
When will we stop providing special services for aborigines?
When will we stop releasing prisoners on bail?"
way too many to list
Can we stop using plastic
How much will incineration cost versus recycling? What is the environmental effect? Can any heating or electrical power be derived from the incinerator?
Are they voting against the incinerators and other factors that will contribute and worsen climate change
"Values based questions, which invite the broader community into the conversation work well.
"Healthy children and communities need clean unpolluted air. Why do you support the Wollert incinerator, which will produce unhealthy chemicals and impact our children's and community health?"
Why do they keep looking for bandaid fixes to this waste problem? And then they don't care about all the sick people that will be affected and the impact that this will cause the health system.
How can any politician support such a poisonous cash grab?
How can you protect the health of your constituents and the planet with toxic incinerators burning our waste?
Would you allow this facility to be built 1 kilometre from your own home?
How do you ensure it's safe for humans, animals and the environment in general?
Can you stop incinerators ?
Why!
Are we going to have energy from burning the waste as Japan practices? With potential lowered energy prices for citizens?
Why don't you do a better job in creating awareness of compost etc?
What guarantees are they prepared to offer about emission content and quality? Any discussion about incinerators in 2026 surely has to start from the output end before even beginning to consider building one.
Issues around infrastructure needed to support the rapid development of high density housing in Brunswick
How will they support climate action and make sure we have an orderly energy transition away from coal and gas?
Have alternative options been explored?
What are you doing to increase transparency and honesty regarding major developments that have long lasting implications on the locale and surrounds, and people's wishes to live happy & healthy lives?
What pollution and emission elimination plans do you have regarding waste?
What will you do to stop this from happening?
If not this, what do we do with our waste? Increase landfill?
"What type of incinerator are they building?

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How will they be fuelled?
Why have they chosen this site?
Is this type of garbage removal only one available to us?"
Do you support the diversion of waste from landfill and the treatment of waste by incinerator to produce electricity and reduce pollution from landfills
Why or why don't you think these incinerators would benefit others?
What are you going to do to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases? How are you going to ensure a greener future that is sustainable for all?
What the candidate knows about this proposal, how much they studied this - how it will effect air, degradation of land people's health , do they support it? If they do why?
How will you ensure the compliance with environmental regulations of companies with regional operations, and how will you be proactive in holding them accountable for legal violations to prevent dangers to public health, as opposed to reactive once a problem is exposed?
Why
What alternative solutions are there to our waste problems
If the waste incinerators are implemented, what are your plans to counter the damage being done
Why allow them if they are so bad for the environment
How have they assessed the impacts and consequences of these projects
What are the benefits of these incinerators and do they outweigh the issues caused by the burning of waste.
Why is there no outreach to residents on this development?
"How they can put so many people's health at risk?
In 20-30 time, will you look back and be devastated that you risked so many people's health, including young children?"
Why are our laws not aligned with those of other states? Why are individuals encouraged to reduce waste on a personal level but government does not support reduction of packaging at a commercial level? Have you viewed Melbourne from the outer north? It is shrouded in smoggy haze. You can view this smog from the lookout at Woodlands or from the Calder hwy driving from Sunbury. Check it out - it's disgusting.
do you plan to stop it
Why do you want to put these incinerators in the suburbs
We have had a lot of bad smells in Fawkner, often in the afternoon and evening. With lots of reports to the EPA, what has been done to prevent pollution nearby?
Considering Cleanways track record of environmental failures when it comes to these waste facilities, why were they approved to build one so close to residential areas?
Why would you want to allow such a thing?
Please don't do this it's awful for everyone!!
Are you serious
Why?
how can we as an individual, and as a collective, put a stop to wealth inequality and end-stage capitalism in order to restore balance to the earth and its inhabitants?
Lots
Do it, beats destroying our rural environment and agriculture for current roll-out of existing large scale renewables and supporting infrastructure.
How are we using the data and learnings from existing and highly successful implementations of this technology?
What other options are available to reduce waste and to dispose of it
Could you please stop the incinerator at wollert, I hope you do.

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What could you to improve the air and water quality
Do you support this plan? If not what are you doing about it?
Sustainable solution
what is
Do you support this and why
Do you support the continuation of these planned incinerators? What will you do to prevent their implementation?
"What will you do to stop all plans for waste incinerators in this state?
How will you justify this decision to your constituents, at this critical time in our survival, when the obvious and well-known effects of this decision manifest?"
what impact will the incinerators have on the environment. Will they have filtration systems to eliminate air pollution. How clean will the site be. what other plans are there to reduce the volume of waste being incinerated. How many jobs will be created. what are the safe guards ensuring the health of the community are not adversely impacted.
Are they planning to have an independent study of the effects of these incinerators, and explain why they are considering them? For instance is it lesser evil compared to landfill? And if they are both bad should we be focused on reducing the amount of rubbish generated.
"Do you support waste and climate GHG reduction?
If so, are you clear that the alleged energy recovery from waste incinerators is wicked nonsense?"
What's the alternative to the waste incinerator? If they go ahead what are the health impacts? Why are they banned in Canberra?
Do they live in the incinerator ratio? How does that influence their decision
Can the incinerator be far away from people? Is it using Japan's proven method of using ultra high temperature? Using it to generate electricity? Is there legislation for air pollution control law, where incinerator must filter out hazardous gases, dioxins and heavy metals?
Why don't you plan next to the suburb where you or your family lives in ?
"What are pollution impacts to air quality and water from it?
Air quality radius of surrounding areas and further, how far can polluted air travel with high winds in any direction?
How will pollution air and water be controlled? Penalties and shutdown if not meeting requirements"
"Are we trying to resolve this issue the proper way or lazy way?
What alternatives are available?"
How will you make housing more affordable and accessible
What is an alternative eco friendly way to dispose of waste instead
How are we going greener and improving our environment?
Why don't you tax gas companies, level plastic and start building govt housing
Undecided.
This state has run down with crime and roads. I think it is too late to promise it should have been looked after while those government were in power. Too late
The duty of an elected representative of the people is to inform them in a timely manner of issues and events that affect their health and general well being. Do you not think high temp plastic incinerators might be such a case? There is no room for secrecy, NDA 's on this issue. If a politician in the 21 st century is clueless on environmental issues then they should resign before they are kicked out by their constituents.
What policies do you have around climate justice, First Nations treaty & gender equality?
Would you provide us with factual information about the issues listed in Q3 above?

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What can I do to help and what are they doing to help stop this and more generally climate change
How do we get this information out to the broader community. This is the first time I've heard about them. Social media campaigns could help.
What do you propose to do with waste instead of the incinerators? Is there any sustainability policies?
Who asked u to support this
More transparency around major changes like this and putting people and the climate before profits
Why are alternate strategies that are more sustainable being explored?
What is your position on waste incinerators? What are you doing to stop production of single use plastic?
Will they rule out the use of incinerators and so-called waste to energy? Will they exclude waste to energy from the circular economy. Will they support measures to reduce consumption and waste, while improving individual and social wellbeing (this can be done)?
Nothing
Why is the health and wellbeing of people living in the North of Melbourne any less important than people who live in other parts of Melbourne?
Concerns me that if the question is about impact on the different aspects of our lives e.g air we breathe, food we eat from our veggie patch's, market gardens, air pollutants we just get the same answer, "all will be ok" minimum risk, but then why some areas have banned or restricted them? Isn't there other options to burning? Etc. Thank you
Is there a better option for moving forward.
What are the alternatives to disposing of waste? How are they committed to education of waste reduction?
Have you tried reducing waste through company fines?
Nothing in relation to the subject discussed above. I'm not happy about the cat curfews coming up next year. I worry about mouse and rat infestation.
Do you oppose the incinerators
What other options are there for waste?
Health and climate impacts-what does the independent science say? What alternatives are better such as recycling to use products in roads or something else??
Climate emergency!!!!
Why not build these waste incinerators further from heavily populated areas?
"What will happen to the waste without these incinerators?"
What can be done to reduce waste overall?"
If they are banned in Canberra and metro NSW why are they allowed here?
"Do you understand the health and climate impact of the proposed waste insincerities?
Will you listen to community views and concerns?
What alternative waste options do you support?"
Please work on doing actual consultation with residents.
It shouldn't continue. This is terrible
Why
What will you do about this?
Why do you think burning waste is a good idea? Have you thought about the immediate as well as long term health impacts of the air pollution the incinerators can cause? Why would you impose known health and environmental dangers on your constituents? What factors were taken into consideration in coming to support this decision? Who will benefit from this

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decision?
What is your policy on waste incinerators in the electorate?
What are more environmentally responsible ways to dispose of waste?
Fight loud and strong against the incinerators for the people
When can construction begin
What options have been looked at for waste management and why has this option been chosen and what does the research evidence tell us.
With the 'massive' plans for urban development within the inner north over the coming years, how much are they intending to budget for education and public transport infrastructure that will directly benefit the new residents in the area?
"Are they in support of these incinerators.
What other solutions would they support/suggest/research. How would they engage the local communities in this discussion?"
What they are planning to do re: climate action. What's their position on waste incinerators? On data centers? Do they support more gas extraction in Vic?
What is your position on these incinerators.



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the **Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People** as the **Traditional Owners** of Merri-bek.

They have a strong connection to the **land, water and sky**.

We respect **Elders** past and present.

We know that Aboriginal people never gave up their control of this land.

This land has always been, and will always be, Aboriginal land.

Thank you to everyone who participated in this survey