

Residents furious at plant go-ahead

LAURA NELSON

nelsonl@goldcoast.com.au

RESIDENTS from Yatala, Ormeau and surrounding areas are outraged about the State Government's approval for a massive Biomass Power Generation Plant to be built at Yatala.

After a year of investigations, the former Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) has recommended that the Gold Coast City Council give the final go-ahead - with some conditions - to the project.

The proposed plant, which would burn green waste, would be built in Sandy Creek Rd and would be the first of its kind in Queensland.

The site is only 800m from homes at Yatala and just over 1km from homes at Ormeau.

The powerful Yatala Residents Alliance (YRA), which has 170 members, is lobbying against the project, while area councillor and deputy mayor Donna Gates has expressed her shock.

YRA co-chairwoman Cavell Dorman said locals were worried about odours, dust, noise, traffic problems and a loss of green space.

She said the proposed plant would have a 30m chimney which would spoil the area's amenity. "There have been 28 submissions from 34 families



Councillor Donna Gates

who live in the vicinity of the Phoenix plant, who are extremely concerned about this application and DERM's response," she said.

Council locked out

DEPUTY Mayor Donna Gates is concerned DERM's approval of the Yatala power plant means the council can no longer have input.

"I am very surprised that DERM recommended this application be approved with conditions to mitigate any impact," she said.

"They had been reviewing it for over a year. I am shocked that it would appear at this point that council officers are now constrained in their considerations by a DERM authorisation."

Cr Gates said council offi-

"We want to know why DERM has given its approval for this plant when Tarong Energy's proposed, state-of-the-art, green waste power station at the Carole Park Synergy Industrial Estate at Ipswich was rejected.

"Research showed that the toxins released when burning wood waste could not be adequately removed and this proposed plant would have been built in a similar proximity from residents as the one proposed for Yatala."

She said they were also concerned there may not be enough qualified people to evaluate this proposal fully.

cers had recommended seeking further advice from an external consultant about the impacts of the plant.

"About 440,000 tonnes of waste goes to Gold Coast landfills every year and I understand that about 52 per cent of the waste generated is organic," she said.

"There is an obvious benefit in organic waste being diverted from our landfills."

However, she said residents were concerned about a wetland area in the site, the visual impact of a 30m chimney and any smell from the operation.

Sustainably dealing with green waste

PROPONENTS of a proposed power plant have said they believe it will be a sustainable way of dealing with green waste for the city.

RPS Group senior planner Amanda Tzannes said the proposal involved upgrading an existing facility at Yatala so that it could process oversized material that could not be converted to compost, mulch or other similar products, as fuel for green energy.

"The proposed facility will feed up to 15 megawatts of renewable energy into the power grid, which will be enough to supply more than 10,000 homes," Mrs Tzannes said.

It will also displace 91,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide which is released annually from traditional, fossil fuel power burning.

"The site is in the Future Industry Precinct within the Yatala Local Area Plan and it does not need any connection to sewer or water, so the facility will keep operating in a self-sufficient manner," Ms Tzannes said.

"Phoenix Power Recyclers Pty Ltd has processed all green waste from Brisbane City Council and until a year ago, half the green waste of the Gold Coast since 1997."