

Friday, 12 December 2014

\$160M waste to energy facility planned for the Hunter

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Jacqueline Ong

Omega Energy has unveiled plans to construct a \$160 million waste to energy facility at the Hunter Industrial Ecology Park in Weston, within the NSW Hunter region.



Artist's impression of Omega Energy's resource and energy recovery facility.

[Omega Energy](#) business development manager Shannon Sullivan told *Inside Waste News* the company was looking to process 200,000 tonnes of residual waste.

"We will process a range of municipal solid waste as well as commercial and industrial waste and Omega will be looking at securing feedstock in the next 12 months," Sullivan said.

Omega has signed an agreement with the Hunter Industrial Ecology Park to lease a five-hectare site pending planning approvals and the company expects to receive its environmental planning requirements from the Department of Planning and Environment before Christmas.

"Although this is the very beginning of the planning process, our intention now is to liaise closely with all local stakeholders to ensure they know what we are proposing and how it will work," Sullivan said.

Omega has partnered with technology provider US-based ArcSec Technologies to produce a clean, synthetic gas at the site.

"ArcSec Technologies have developed a plasma arc gasification process, which is a high temperature process. It's able to get to 1,200 degrees, which makes the process more efficient," Sullivan said.

At that temperature, waste is broken down at a molecular level to produce a clean syngas. The gas then goes through scrubbers as well as a gas turbine to produce energy.

Sullivan said the plan is to support surrounding operations with this energy and the park, with its broader principle of sharing resources, already has the necessary infrastructure to accommodate syngas.

"There is high voltage electricity infrastructure at the door, which is able to tie us back to the grid. We will also be able to build additional infrastructure within the park and if we decide to retail the gas, we will then look at developing the necessary infrastructure," Sullivan said.

"Industrial Ecology is achieved in the park by co-locating numerous resource recovery operations where infrastructure is shared and recovered resources exchanged, in order to achieve cost efficiencies and sustainable environmental outcomes," the park's managing director Garbis Simonian added.

Apart from the infrastructure, Omega Energy general manager Jacob Whiting pointed to the site's proximity to the new Hunter Expressway as a key factor in the company's decision to build its plant in the park.

"The Hunter Expressway will be a catalyst for business growth in the region just like the M7 has been for Western Sydney," Whiting said.

"The facility will further unlock the waste sector, providing investment and job growth in the Hunter."

Simonian agreed: "The agreement with Omega will accelerate the range of resource recovery activities already operating in and around the Hunter Industrial Ecology Park and will be a major step to diverting waste from landfill and achieving a circular economy. This will be the world's first dedicated resource recovery park bringing businesses together to provide a complete recycling solution."

"There is no doubt this facility will be a model that can be replicated in other parts of the state and nation," he said.

It is anticipated that community consultation will commence in the new year after the Department of Planning and Environment has issued the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements. Subject to planning approvals, construction of the first stage of the facility is expected to commence early 2017 and be operational in 2018.

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