Questions on Notice taken during the hearing on 27th June 2017

1. **The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Thank you for appearing before the inquiry. Are you able to let the Committee know how many times either yourselves or Mr Malouf have met with any of the ministers in the State Government in relation to this proposal?
Mr BIGGS: The answer is no, I do not know.
The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Would you be able to take it on notice and provide that information to the Committee?
Mr BIGGS: Absolutely.

Answer – I have never met with any Minister in the State Government in relation to the proposal.
I have reviewed the diary of Mr Malouf in relation to the question.

Diary records for Mr Malouf indicate:

- **(i)** **Meeting with the Former Minister for Planning, The Hon. Rob Stokes MP on the 4th May 2016 – To provide an update on the Energy from Waste proposed development at Eastern Creek which includes a short video.**
- **(ii)** **Meeting with the Former Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy, The Hon. Anthony Roberts MP on the 25th November 2016 – The Next Generation (TNG) Energy from Waste Plant, Eastern Creek Approval Update.**

On 24th January 2014 Mr John Robertson then leader of the NSW Opposition attended the Genesis Facility and received a briefing on site about the TNG proposal.

2. **The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I am concerned about evidence given this morning that what goes in is immaterial to what goes out. That seems unbelievable to me. If we put asbestos in, is that not a concern? If, for example, asbestos is put in, are you not concerned about what comes out?
Mr BIGGS: I will defer to the scientists on that, but my understanding of it, from a layman's point of view, is that what Mr Roddis has referred to as the back-end processes, or capturing particulates and dealing with acidic gases and other components of the emissions, are sufficient to ensure that those materials will not be released to the atmosphere because that would cause a health concern for the surrounding community.

Answer - The proponent acknowledges that some members of the community are concerned that Asbestos might form part of the fuel stream and that there might as a result be risks to the environment and the community arising from that.

In relation to the commercial imperatives for the disposal of asbestos

1 The Protection of the Environment Operations Act provides that the proper and safe method for disposal of asbestos is by landfilling.

2 Diversion of approved residual fuel wastes away from being landfilled leaves more available space for the landfilling of asbestos and asbestos contaminated soils.

3 The availability of Landfill space to dispose of asbestos is in short supply in Sydney. Therefore it is commercially advantageous to the landfill operator to landfill asbestos.

In relation to Asbestos in an incinerator, I have been advised as follows,

4 Asbestos, the fibres of which [if inhaled] are deadly.

5 In its bonded form asbestos is an inert mineral resistant to the high temperatures [850degrees Celsius] at which an energy from waste plant operates.

6 These temperatures do not cause asbestos to degrade or change form. If small pieces of metal or brick or stone or bonded asbestos are present in the waste stream they are unlikely to be affected by the heat and will form part of the bottom ash/residue which will be removed and disposed of by landfilling.

Existing Quality control procedures

7 As an example the Genesis facility currently recovers wood and timber materials from the mixed building and demolition waste stream for the purposes of reprocessing those materials for use in landscaping.

8 In order to do so, Genesis operates procedures to remove contaminants which would be unacceptable in the domestic space or for landscaping purposes generally. These unacceptable materials include, CCA treated timbers, lead painted timbers, brick, concrete, plastics, metals, glass and asbestos.

9 Genesis landscaping products are tested by an independent NATA accredited laboratory and the results of the testing provide assurance that the quality control processes are operating to the required standards.

10 The same or similar quality control processes would be employed in respect of the fuel waste stream.

EfW technology

11 **Mr RODDIS:** It is important to briefly tell you about the various components of the pollution control, so injection of lime for acid gases, injection of activated carbon to absorb volatile organics and any long-chain hydrocarbons and also mercury. Specifically in relation to something like asbestos, I will say that asbestos is an inert material. Once it gets into your lungs, yes, it is an issue, but physically you probably would not expect it to combust, even at 800-odd degrees. If that material did go into an ash component, we have a network of bag filters on the back end of the plant where all particulate, including the activated carbon that I mentioned, is injected to scrub the exhaust gases.

All of that is then caught in a series of bag filters and a whole bag house. That material then becomes the ash component of the facility, and that is subsequently disposed of.

3. **Dr MEHREEN FARUQI:** Have you approached the Clean Energy Finance Corporation for funding for this incinerator?
Mr BIGGS: I believe somebody has approached them on our behalf, yes.
Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Have you had a response from them yet?
Mr BIGGS: They indicated that they would like to see the planning process further extended until we got some sort of outcome there.
Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: How much funding have you applied for?
Mr BIGGS: I do not recall.
Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: Could you take that on notice?

Answer - So far as I have been able to ascertain although preliminary information discussions have taken place no formal application for funding has been submitted by the proponent or by anyone on its behalf to the Clean Energy Finance Corporation or to any similar funding body.

4. **The Hon. LOU AMATO:** Ms Lee, I come back to your report. Do you have results for the air quality on a still day in the Sydney Basin? Have you taken into account population growth and industry growth over coming years in that report?
Ms LEE: As Mr Roddis touched on before, the air quality is averaged out—chronic exposure for 29 years—
The CHAIR: Order! I am not seeking an answer for these. We are putting them on notice. We are out of time.
The Hon. LOU AMATO: What we would all like to know is what the air pollution is like on a still day—on a day when there is no air movement. I am not talking about a projection for 29 years. If we have four or five still days what is the air quality now and what would you predict it to be with population and energy growth in the future?
The CHAIR: And weather events.

Answer - Mr Damon Roddis.

The air quality predictions made within the air quality assessment include a cumulative assessment whereby the worst-case observed air quality is added to the worst-case predicted air quality associated with the project. In this way, the air quality assessment seeks to present the "worst-worst" case prediction.

In other words, the atmospheric dispersion model outputs will capture the results of worst-case dispersion conditions, which may include 'still' conditions when local air pollution is not advected away to other regions.

The air quality assessment has not quantitatively accounted for the effects of population and energy growth into the future.

However, in general, air quality in NSW has improved since the 1980s, and this trend is either expected to continue as cleaner technologies / vehicles are adopted, or is likely to stabilise compared to current conditions. There is no trend that indicates that future air quality is likely to be degraded compared to the status quo.