

Biomass plant sparks worry on emissions

HEALTH IMPACT: GROUP AWAITS GREEN REPORT ON PLANNED RECYCLE FACILITY

JUDITH MAIZEY
judith.maizey@news.com.au

YATALA residents opposed to a proposed biomass plant should find out this month if it has passed its state environmental check list.

A material change of use application lodged with Gold Coast City Council by Phoenix Power Recyclers for a multi-million plant in Sandy Creek Rd, Yatala, is under review for the second time by the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection.

As well as concerns about noise pollution, odours, increased traffic and falling property values, the Yatala Residents Alliance is worried that emissions from the plant's 30m chimney stack 24 hours a day, seven days a week, will affect people's health.

A petition organised by the alliance against the plant, which would generate elec-



OPPOSITION: Residents association's Brad Atkins.

tricity for the statewide grid, was signed by 5200 people in four weeks and has been tabled in State Parliament and given to council.

Alliance spokesman David Osborne said research found American doctors and scientists were concerned that nano particles issued from US biomass plants could be responsible for an increase in asthma and bronchitis, and high rates of disabilities in children.

He said he was not sure how far nano particles could travel, but had heard it could be up to 100km.

"We've drawn a circle around the (proposed biomass) plant of just 7km ... and it includes Windaroo, Mt Warren, Bannockburn and Beenleigh," he said. "In that area, we've counted 12 schools, 11 child-care centres, three aged care facilities, and three to four public sporting facilities where people are outside all the time.

"We've looked at this and thought if this (plant) is going to blow (emissions) all the time, what are the long term effects?"

Mr Osborne said the alliance was not against the process as it might be a better alternative than coal-fired power stations for electricity generation. But the plant would be the first of its type in Australia and was an unknown. "We're saying, 'why not look at moving it to a location that will not effect residents of this area or any other area,'" he said.

Delay for environmental report

THE State Government department reviewing the environmental credentials of a controversial biomass plant at Yatala needs more information from the applicant before it can finalise its report.

The Yatala Residents Alliance, opposed to the plant, had expected the

report to be handed to Gold Coast City Council by today.

In a written statement, Department of Environment and Heritage Protection executive director Andrew Connor said additional information was requested of the applicant, Phoenix Power Recyclers, about two weeks ago.

GCCC Deputy Mayor Donna Gates, the divisional councillor for Yatala, said residents west of the M1 believed no "dirty industry" or chimneys similar to the Rocky Point plant would be built in the area.

Phoenix Power Recyclers owner Neville Brownlow could not be contacted.