



**CentrePort**  
Wellington

13 October 1999

**Mr Stuart Macaskill**  
Chairman  
Wellington Regional Council  
PO Box 11-646  
WELLINGTON

Dear Stuart

**MEDICAL WASTE (WELLINGTON) LIMITED**

Thank you for taking the time to talk with us, and further to my earlier memo dated 8 October 1999, I would like to add further comments made by my fellow Director, Bernie Knowles.

We appreciate that the port's ownership of 50% of Medical Waste (Wellington) Limited bring you into the "firing line" when the issue is raised. However, our partners are a major Australasian company with real expertise in these matters and we believe we can add an influence which is totally in accord with the environmental expectations of your Council.

The location of the incinerator has an historical basis. Early MAF requirements were that ship wastes should not be carried over land and the site was about the only place, other than Seaview, where rubbish could be delivered by sea. At that time the area round Burnham Wharf was much more industrially oriented with a major fuel installation, gas works, etc and Maupuia not contemplated.

While the sea delivery is no longer relevant, the amount of airport waste and now hospital waste still makes the site one which would be entirely suitable IF there was no perception that incineration was something to be avoided. Other incineration plants which previously existed in and around Wellington did not have capability of high temperature incineration and have been closed down. MAF and health requirements still demand destruction of organic material and Medical Waste now provide a facility for the whole of the WRC region.

Additionally to quarantine waste and hospital and animal wastes (from Massey University dissections etc) we burn confidential papers. These are largely Government or medical papers together with some tobacco wastes. All of these latter products assist the efficiency of the plant, ie it goes better and cleaner with more product.

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To eliminate smoke completely would require fitting **an after** burner (some \$1,000,000 expenditure) **and** use of much more gas with the increase in CO' which is again undesirable.

It is unlikely that even a smokeless, dioxin less incinerator would **have** public approval **tut equally** we face **a** real problem in **locating** any **waste** disposal unit **from** public reaction. Work is being carried out in Auckland by our partner on a **rotary** autoclave - basically grinding all waste to small size, autoclaving it to **inert biological** status and **burying** it in landfill. If it proves **successful** this would appear to be the way to go - possibly **locating** it at a landfill site or **well** out of the way in **Waingawa** if appropriate **resource** management consent can be **obtained**. **Whatever** solution is found (including higher temperature incineration if autoclaving is not **successful**) the present life of the **existing** plant is **limited** - probably no more than two years.

Meantime the major issue is smoke and dioxins. Recent improvements to the plant **hnvc reduce smoke incidents** (it **does** not **producc smoke** when running well) but **steam** condensation is often taken for smoke when there has been evidence of earlier smoke emissions.

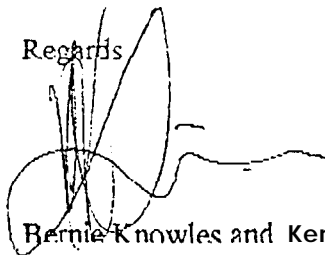
As advised dioxins are the result of all burning - barbecues or car exhausts **etc** and have an **unfortunate** connotation of being **cancer related** - **notwithstanding** that only one of the hundreds of **dioxins** has been found to be dangerous. Given the dispersion of the **emissions** by normal Wellington ventilation there is no public health (**Mt Victoria** tunnel would be likely to be a **much greater hazard**) **hut** we **recognise** **perception** and publicity create a problem which we must work to eliminate. We can only assure you that **the issue** has **been before the Medical Waste (Wellington) Limited Board** for **some** 18 months (largely on economic rather than environmental grounds initially) and that the **CentrePort** Board has been kept fully informed and keeps us both on our toes to find a solution.

We can assure you that the interests of the Regional Council are kept very much to the fore through our participation and **respectfully** suggest that they are better met by participation **in seeking** a solution within the Company **than** might otherwise be the case if the Council's interest in the problem was not so directly linked to **CentrePort** shareholding.

We would be happy to discuss the concerns of any of the groups that have an interest in this matter and which raise them in the first instance with your Council. Monitoring of the emissions **will continue** - albeit that most of the concerns raised with the Council will continue as long as any visible evidence of combustion is **noted**.

Thank you again for your interest.

Regards



Bernie Knowles and Ken Harris