



## PROPOSED CASINO BIOHUB

### Frequently asked questions

**Q: Is this an Incinerator Project?**

A: No, this proposal does not involve any burning of waste.

**Q: How does this process differ from waste incineration?**

A: Unlike waste incineration, which involves burning waste to generate heat and energy, our biodigester process relies on anaerobic digestion. Anaerobic digestion provides a controlled setting for the natural breakdown of organic materials without oxygen – comparable to our own bodies' digestion processes or what you can see occurring in wetlands. These breakdown processes produce methane gas and energy without emitting harmful pollutants. The methane gas captured will be used to create renewable electricity for the use at the site.

**Q: What is anaerobic digestion**

Anaerobic digestion is a biological process that produces primarily methane and carbon dioxide and represents the same decomposition process that occurs in landfill, but in a more accelerated and controlled environment. Naturally occurring bacteria break down the organic material through several phases to produce biogas. This biogas is then utilised in purpose-built engines to be converted to renewable electricity.

**Q: Will locals have the opportunity for employment, both in skilled and unskilled positions?**

A: Absolutely. We're committed to providing job opportunities for both skilled professionals and those seeking entry-level positions from our local community. This not only contributes to the local economy but also fosters community involvement and growth.

**Q: Will there be a reduction in odours emitted from the paddock and surrounding area?**

A: The enclosed process offers several significant benefits. It provides a more controlled environment, effectively reducing odours and the potential for environmental emissions. Furthermore, it captures and harnesses the methane gas produced, converting it into usable, renewable energy rather than it being released into the atmosphere.

**Q: Are there any potential environmental hazards associated with the proposed project?**

A: Specialist reports will be prepared as part of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process to identify and detail any potential impacts to land, air and waterways and how they would be managed. However, any impacts are likely to be minimal, with an overall net benefit for the Co-op and the community.

**Q: What is the advantage of the closed anaerobic digestion process over the current open process?**

A: The current open process does not allow the capture of energy from the biogas produced in the open process as organic matter breaks down. By capturing and enclosing the wastewater in



the Biohub system, we can use it at its highest value for as long as possible – recovering its energy, heat and nutrient content.

**Q: Can negative health implications result from this project?**

A: There are no negative health implications created by the project. The EIS document will address project impacts.

**Q: Where will the waste, including wastewater, be disposed of?**

A: The wastewater output from the Biohub project will re-enter the current Co-op supply and disposal system. These liquids would continue (via existing infrastructure) to be irrigated on Co-op land as per the existing arrangement, however with the benefit of having an expected lower nutrient load because of processing through the Biohub.

**Q: Will there be an increase in truck movements?**

A: Construction activities, including an increase of heavy vehicle movements on the local road network, have the potential to impact traffic. However, these impacts are anticipated to be relatively minor due to the scale of the project and the neighbouring industrial land uses.

**Q: What does Circular Economy mean?**

A Circular Economy is an economy that reduces waste generation by continuing to re-purpose materials for their highest value, effectively retaining their value for as long as possible. The basis of this approach is the transition away from a 'take, make, use and dispose' economy towards a more circular approach. With the Casino Biohub project, our focus is on repurposing the existing wastewater from the Co-op, extracting its maximum value to create an energy source that can be further re-utilised by the Co-op to sustain its operations. This effectively creates a process cycle, otherwise known as a Circular Economy.

**Q: What type of renewable energy does the project generate?**

A: Renewable electricity would be generated and consumed onsite by the Co-op. This would enable the Co-op to sustainably power a large proportion of its own operations, adopting the principles of Circular Economy.

**Q: What is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)?**

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is a document prepared to address the potential impacts of the project on the environment, and to address the Department of Planning and Environment Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs). It also includes measures to mitigate and manage identified impacts. The EIS is a public document that will be made available via the Planning NSW Major Projects website (<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects>).

**Q: Who is developing the project?**

The Biohub is being developed by Helmont Energy, in partnership with the Co-op, and has the backing of Australia's largest bioenergy company, LMS Energy. Helmont will develop, operate, and invest in the Biohub, while the Co-op will supply the necessary organic waste for its operation.



## **Helmont Energy**

Helmont energy is a developer of bioenergy projects focusing on agricultural industries and food processors. They aim to decarbonise the Australian economy by developing and using bioenergy in the agriculture, transport, natural gas, and stationary energy sectors.

## **LMS Energy**

LMS is Australia's most successful biogas company and largest emissions reducer under the Emissions Reduction Fund. It has 62 biogas projects across Australia, New Zealand, and the United States with around 250 dedicated biogas employees. LMS Energy projects abate methane emissions and generate enough renewable energy to power around 100,000 homes or 250,000 Australians each day.

## **The Casino Food Co-op**

The Co-op was established in 1933 and provides a diverse offering of world-class, sustainable processing through its multiple facilities in the NSW northern rivers. It currently boasts:

- 1000+ employees
- 500+ farmers producing quality livestock
- \$900m annual production value
- \$80m invested in innovation for its facilities in the five years prior to 2023
- 50,000 tonnes of quality product each year for national and international customers.

## **Q: How will my views on the project be considered?**

We welcome you sharing your views or asking questions about the project at any time and will take these into consideration in further project development.

The assessment steps for State Significant Development are outlined in the image below. We are currently at Step 2, with the Department reviewing the Scoping Report, and referring to other Government agencies to determine the project-specific SEARs (Step 3). Further information and guidelines on the assessment of State Significant Development is available from [www.planning.nsw.gov.au](http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au).

Element has been engaged by Helmont as the Communications and Engagement partner for the project. Element is available to discuss the project and respond to any enquires or concerns related to the proposed Biohub. Contact details for Jamie Seaton, Principal Engagement and Social Consultant are provided at final page of this FAQ sheet.

Helmont Energy are aiming to submit the EIS in Q4 2023 (Step 4), at which time the Department will exhibit the application (Step 5). Opportunities to comment and make submissions on the formal application are then provided at Step 6.



Regardless of the above process, Helmont Energy welcome requests for further information at any time via [community@elementenvironment.com.au](mailto:community@elementenvironment.com.au).