Hallam Rd Waste Transfer Facility

A Shameful Retrospective

Read the documents and make up your own mind

August 2026

For years, communities surrounding the Hallam Road landfill had a reasonable expectation about what would eventually happen to the site. The landfill would close, the land would be rehabilitated and significant public open space would form part of its future. That was not simply a neighbourhood rumour or an aspiration invented after the Waste Transfer Station was proposed. Casey's own Hampton Park Development Plan said the quarry and landfill site was to be progressively rehabilitated and developed for public open space upon the cessation of current operations.

Then the strategic direction changed. Hallam Road was identified under Victorian waste policy as a waste and resource recovery hub of State importance. A specific Hampton Park Waste Transfer Station was being designed by SUEZ by late 2018. Road infrastructure was being upgraded around the precinct. Land agreements affecting future public open space changed. The 2021 Hub Plan called for the planning framework to strengthen waste and resource recovery operations. By 2022, Casey was preparing a new Development Plan which expressly supported a commercial scale transfer station and had commissioned an independent noise assessment of the specific proposal.

The formal planning application most residents would recognise did not arrive until 29 December 2023. When it did, the Development Plan Overlay meant Casey could not formally consider ordinary objections and the application was exempt from public notice and third party appeal rights. Casey approved the planning permit in 2024. EPA then undertook its own environmental assessment, received 751 submissions, and refused the Development Licence because it found unacceptable risks to human health and the environment, primarily from odour and noise. Veolia challenged that decision. VCAT upheld EPA's refusal on 10 April 2026. The title makes my view reasonably obvious. Readers do not have to share it.

1. What residents were originally told

The older Hampton Park Development Plan was clear about the long term direction of the quarry and landfill land. Among its public open space objectives was the progressive rehabilitation and development of the quarry and landfill site for public open space once current operations ceased. The plan also required buffers to protect existing and future residential areas from the quarry and landfill. That does not mean every hectare of the broader precinct was promised as a park, nor does it mean a closed landfill can immediately become public recreation land. Landfill rehabilitation, gas extraction, leachate management, monitoring and aftercare continue for decades. But the strategic direction matters. The community had an official planning basis for expecting the waste disposal use to end and a substantial green space outcome to follow.

Even the 2022 draft Hampton Park Hill Development Plan retained a substantial green space objective. It called for the safe transition of the landfill to public open space after closure and rehabilitation, and said waste disposal related activities should not expand onto land designated for future public open space. The argument is therefore not that all green space vanished overnight. It is that the strategic identity of the precinct changed from a landfill with an eventual public open space future to a State significant waste and resource recovery hub in which substantial waste activity could continue after landfill.

Sources: Hampton Park Development Plan v4.1; Draft Hampton Park Hill Development Plan 2022

2. Hallam Road becomes a site of State importance

Victoria has to deal with its waste somewhere. Landfills have finite capacity, population growth increases waste volumes and governments would be negligent if they waited until the final landfill cell was full before planning what came next. The State-wide Waste and Resource Recovery Infrastructure Plan 2018 identified the Hallam Road area as one of Victoria's hubs of State importance for waste and resource recovery. Casey's later Hampton Park Hill material repeatedly relies on that designation. The adopted 2023 Development Plan says the State policy seeks to retain existing waste sites because suitable land for new waste infrastructure near Melbourne is limited.

That policy choice changed the local picture. At the local level, residents had a planning document pointing toward eventual rehabilitation and public open space. At the State level, the same broad area was becoming strategically valuable as long term waste infrastructure. Those positions can technically coexist, but they create very different expectations about what 'the landfill closing' actually means.

Sources: City of Casey Hampton Park Hill overview; Adopted Hampton Park Hill Development Plan 2023

3. The road upgrade that later became very useful

In September 2018, the Victorian Government announced major works on the Hallam Road Upgrade. Remember that: 2018. The project added lanes between Ormond Road and South Gippsland Highway, upgraded the Hallam Road, South Gippsland Highway and Evans Road intersection, and installed traffic lights at the SUEZ Hampton Park Resource Recovery Centre. The Government said the signals were required to safely control the large number of trucks already entering and leaving the site. A dedicated turning lane was also provided. There is nothing suspicious about improving a dangerous or congested road. The Government's stated reason was safety and traffic management, and that explanation should be accepted unless evidence shows otherwise.

What makes the timing interesting is what came next. The later Waste Transfer Station proposal relied on the same signalised access and Veolia promoted those traffic lights as part of the site's transport advantages. The 2021 Hub Plan likewise described the signals as infrastructure that would facilitate movement into and out of that part of the waste hub. The traffic lights are not evidence that the Waste Transfer Station had been predetermined. They are evidence that, by the time the later facility was proposed, substantial public road infrastructure was already in place to support heavy vehicle access to the precinct. The useful remaining document is the original traffic modelling and design brief, particularly any assumptions about future truck volumes and future waste uses. It is worth remembering that this intersection was placed at the entrance to a site that would soon be closing.

Sources: Victorian Government, work starts on Hallam Road; Victoria's Big Build Hallam Road Upgrade; Hallam Road Hub Plan 2021

4. The Waste Transfer Station existed by 2018

The formal planning application arrived in December 2023. The project history did not begin there. The architectural material reviewed during preparation of this retrospective contains a preliminary Hampton Park Transfer Station issue dated 29 November 2018. Further design work followed in 2019, including drawings issued for pricing. By October 2019, unattended noise monitoring was being undertaken at locations representative of nearby residential receivers. By early 2020, technical work included a report titled 'Preliminary Geotechnical Investigation, Waste Transfer Station Upgrade, SUEZ Hallam Road Landfill' and a landfill gas risk assessment.

The public record also now contains Casey's 2022 commissioned ARUP report. ARUP says it was engaged by Casey to support preparation of the Development Plan, that it peer reviewed a previously submitted Golder assessment commissioned by SUEZ, and that it modelled the proposed transfer station at 290 Hallam Road. ARUP also says the new adjacent site at 290 Hallam Road had been nominated for use as the existing landfill approached capacity. The significance is straightforward. A specific commercial transfer station project was under development years before PA23/0694. What remains missing from the public record is the original 2018 SUEZ project brief and business case explaining exactly what the project was intended to do at that time, its proposed scale and the commercial decision behind the 2019 pricing work.

Sources: ARUP Hampton Park Transfer Station Noise Impact Assessment

5. February 2020 and the public open space land agreements

On 18 February 2020, Casey considered Hampton Park Landfill Land Agreements. Council agreed in principle to accept Lot 1 in lieu of Lot 4 for nil consideration for public open space, contemplated a long term lease or transfer of Lot 2 for public open space, and authorised negotiations concerning new and existing section 173 agreements. This should not be reduced to a slogan about Council giving land to SUEZ. The legal arrangements were more complicated and the Council resolution itself describes land being transferred or leased to Council for public open space.

The relevant point is timing. We now know that a Waste Transfer Station project already existed when those arrangements were being changed. The specific Golder geotechnical report for the WTS upgrade is dated 19 February 2020, the day after the Council decision. A report date does not mean the work began that day, and it certainly does not prove the two matters were connected. It does, however, remove any doubt about whether the WTS project existed at the time. The remaining question is therefore precise: what did Casey know about the developing SUEZ WTS project when it considered the land agreements, and did that knowledge have any relevance to the land configuration? That should be answerable from the Council file, correspondence, section 173 material and survey plans.

Sources: Casey Council minutes, 18 February 2020

6. Casey loses its elected councillors

The following day, 19 February 2020, Parliament passed the legislation that dismissed Casey's councillors after the municipal monitor found serious governance failures. Noelene Duff was appointed interim administrator, followed by a three person panel which remained until the 2024 general council election. The dismissal itself is not being challenged here. The previous council's governance problems were serious and required action. The point for this chronology is what happened after it. For most of the period in which the future of Hallam Road was strategically reconsidered, Casey had no elected councillors. During administration the 2021 Hub Plan was developed, the Hampton Park Hill planning framework was rewritten, the specific transfer station was technically assessed, the Development Plan was adopted and the formal planning application was eventually determined.

Administrators lawfully exercised Council's powers. That does not make their decisions invalid or turn them into State Government decisions. It does mean residents went through an unusually important period of long term land use planning without locally elected representatives.

Sources: Casey interim administrator announcement; Casey three administrators appointed; Local Government Victoria independent reports

7. The 2021 Hallam Road Hub Plan changes the direction

The Hallam Road Waste and Resource Recovery Hub Plan is one of the most important documents in this history. Prepared by the Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Group, it treated Hallam Road as part of the State's strategic waste network and looked beyond landfill disposal to an ongoing waste and resource recovery role. Its recommendations were direct. Casey was to review and update the planning framework for the hub so that new provisions acknowledged and strengthened existing waste and resource recovery operations. Council was also to clarify future public open space and engage the community during the later review of the planning framework. The plan also contemplated future traffic growth, internal road networks and continuing waste uses. It noted that the Hallam Road upgrade and traffic lights at the SUEZ precinct would facilitate movement into and out of the hub.

This is the point at which the two futures become impossible to ignore. The old local plan pointed to rehabilitation and public open space after landfill. The Hub Plan said the planning framework needed to be strengthened for future waste and resource recovery. The community consultation recommended by the Hub Plan would occur later, during the planning framework review. By then, however, a specific commercial WTS project had already existed for several years.

Sources: Hallam Road Waste and Resource Recovery Hub Plan 2021

8. SUEZ becomes Veolia

The company name changes part way through the story. The early Waste Transfer Station project belonged to SUEZ, not Veolia. Veolia's Australian merger information says SUEZ Recycling & Recovery became part of Veolia on 19 January 2022, with legal entity names changing later that year. The ACCC had approved the broader transaction in December 2021 subject to undertakings. That matters because the 2018, 2019 and 2020 project documents should not be casually described as Veolia documents. They are evidence that SUEZ was developing the project before Veolia took control. The important issue is continuity. The project did not materialise from nowhere after the acquisition. The later Veolia proposal inherited a design and technical history from SUEZ.

Sources: Veolia ANZ merger FAQ; ACCC Veolia and Suez merger review

9. By 2022, Casey was assessing a specific transfer station

The 2022 planning material removes any suggestion that the new Development Plan was considering a transfer station only in the abstract. ARUP's report says Casey engaged it to support the Development Plan and undertake an independent environmental noise assessment. It peer reviewed the Golder report commissioned by SUEZ, measured existing plant and equipment, liaised with operators of the existing and proposed site, modelled the proposed transfer station and considered in principle mitigation. Casey's December 2022 Council report was equally explicit. It said the draft Development Plan sought to facilitate State and metropolitan strategies for ongoing waste and resource recovery, including support for the development of a commercial scale transfer station.

The adopted 2023 Development Plan lists the SUEZ Transfer Station Upgrade Overview and the ARUP Hampton Park Transfer Station Noise Impact Assessment among the material informing the plan. This is an important governance fact. A specific commercial project and its technical information were part of the environment in which the strategic planning framework was being rewritten. That is not automatically improper. Strategic planning is often informed by known proposals. But when the resulting Development Plan later becomes relevant to whether an individual application receives notice and third party appeal rights, the relationship between the strategic plan and the known commercial project deserves to be completely transparent.

By September 2022, Casey's knowledge of the specific proposal is documented even more directly. City of Casey officer Jason Pullman attended Veolia's Hallam Road Community Reference Group meeting with Veolia and EPA representatives. Casey presented on the Hampton Park Hill Development Plan and Veolia then presented the proposed transfer station, its intended role consolidating waste for Maryvale and the reasons it said Taylors Road and Ordish Road could not support the facility. That does not tell us that Casey had decided the eventual planning application. It does tell us that the strategic planning work and the specific commercial proposal were sitting in the same room, being discussed with the same people, well before PA23/0694 was lodged.

Sources: ARUP Noise Impact Assessment; Casey Council meeting material, 13 December 2022; Casey Council meeting agenda, 18 July 2023

10. The community was consulted, and overwhelmingly objected

It would be wrong to say there was no consultation on the Hampton Park Hill Development Plan. There was substantial consultation. The draft plan was exhibited for six weeks in 2022. Casey's adopted plan records letters to about 2,600 landowners and occupiers, stakeholder emails, newspaper notices, community sessions and engagement with the Lynbrook Residents Association and the landfill Community Reference Group. A total of 1,068 submissions were received. Star News reported that the Community Engagement Summary found 99 per cent of submissions objected to the draft. Concerns included odour, traffic, property impacts, landfill buffers, consultation and the earlier expectation that the landfill land would ultimately become parkland.

This is where the consultation question becomes more complicated. The community was consulted. The harder question is what remained open to change by the time that consultation occurred. By then the State had identified the precinct as strategically important for waste, the Hub Plan had called for stronger waste planning controls, SUEZ had been developing the WTS for years and Casey had commissioned a technical assessment of the proposed facility. Consultation is important. Consultation after much of the strategic direction has already been established is not the same thing as involving a community while the fundamental choice of location is still open.

Sources: Adopted Hampton Park Hill Development Plan 2023; Star News, Landfill plan angers the community

11. Maryvale, SEMAWP and Casey were all connected before the permit was decided

Veolia's September 2022 Hallam Road material answers one question directly. Hampton Park was already being linked to Maryvale well before the formal planning application. Veolia described the transfer station as required to consolidate and transfer waste initially for Maryvale Energy from Waste and potentially other energy from waste facilities. Casey was not watching the regional waste process from the sidelines. It was one of the nine councils participating in the South Eastern Metropolitan Advanced Waste Processing project. When the 25 year Waste Supply Agreement was announced in July 2024, Casey's Chair of Administrators said Casey had been a proud contributor to the project for several years and that Council knowledge experts had worked on it.

That agreement was entered into before Casey determined Veolia's planning permit. Casey later acknowledged its dual roles as a participant in SEMAWP and as the Responsible Planning Authority for the Hampton Park application. Council says no Casey planning officers were involved in the SEMAWP procurement, and officers who were involved in the procurement declared a potential interest and did not participate in consideration of the planning permit. Those safeguards should be acknowledged.

But they do not make the institutional overlap disappear. Star News later reported correspondence from SEMAWP Chair Mick Cummins stating that the agreements contemplated use of the Hampton Park Transfer Station and that SEMAWP **had contracted with the consortium on the basis that the Hampton Park facility would gain a permit for operation**. Star News says it separately confirmed the accuracy of that information with Mr Cummins. Casey, for its part, said there could not be a contractual requirement for Council to guarantee a permit and that the planning assessment was independent of its contractual obligations. Both statements matter. They are exactly why the relevant procurement and contractual material should be released. The public should be able to see what was assumed about Hampton Park, what contingency existed if it did not obtain approvals, and how those commercial assumptions were kept separate from Casey's statutory planning role.

Casey has also stated that the SEMAWP procurement was led by the Victorian Government through the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action on behalf of the participating councils. That places the State Government firmly inside the regional procurement history, not outside it.

Sources: Veolia Hallam Road CRG minutes, September 2022; City of Casey SEMAWP Waste Supply Agreement announcement, July 2024; Star News, Casey denies waste station conflict, September 2025

12. The Development Plan was rewritten around the new strategic direction

Casey's own material explains why the old Development Plan was being replaced. The existing framework did not reflect the State Government strategy identifying the site for future waste and resource recovery activities. The December 2022 Council report said the new Development Plan sought to facilitate ongoing waste and resource recovery and circular economy policy, including a commercial scale transfer station. The adopted 2023 plan says the Hallam Road landfill and surrounds are a hub of State importance and identifies locations for new waste facilities while also retaining substantial public open space. This is not a secret buried in an obscure file. It was stated in Council reports and consultation material. The uncomfortable part is the sequence. A commercial WTS was already being developed and assessed while the strategic framework that would support future waste uses was being rewritten.

The plan still contained green space, including passive open space over rehabilitated landfill. But the original vision had changed in a fundamental way. Waste activity was no longer simply something expected to end before the land transitioned toward public open space. Ongoing waste and resource recovery had become a protected strategic function of the precinct.

Sources: Casey Council meeting material, 13 December 2022; Adopted Hampton Park Hill Development Plan 2023

13. The formal planning application finally arrives

Veolia lodged Planning Application PA23/0694 on 29 December 2023 for a Waste Transfer Station at 290 Hallam Road. By then, the project had a documented history stretching back approximately five years. The site had State strategic significance. The WTS had been designed and technically investigated. Casey had commissioned its own noise work. The Hampton Park Hill Development Plan had been adopted. Veolia had publicly linked the facility with Maryvale and explained why Taylors Road and Ordish Road were not suitable alternatives. December 2023 was therefore not the beginning of the project. It was the point at which the developed project entered the formal planning permit process.

Sources: Casey PA23/0694 page

14. The community could not formally object to the actual permit application

This is one of the most important facts in the entire chronology. Casey's own PA23/0694 page says that, under the Casey Planning Scheme, Council was unable to formally consider submissions or objections to the planning permit application because the existing Development Plan Overlay exempted the application from public notice and third party appeal rights. That does not mean Casey secretly removed objection rights for Veolia's application. Development Plan Overlays commonly operate this way when an application is generally in accordance with an approved Development Plan. Casey's 2022 FAQ had already told the public that future applications generally in accordance with an approved Development Plan would be exempt from notice and appeal rights.

The lawful operation of the overlay is not the issue. The issue is what that makes the earlier strategic process mean. If the later detailed application can proceed without ordinary objection and appeal rights, the Development Plan stage becomes the critical point for public influence. By that stage, the State strategic direction was already established, the commercial WTS already existed, ARUP had already assessed it and Casey was openly saying the new plan would support a commercial scale transfer station. The question is therefore not whether the community was consulted. It was. The question is whether the community was brought in early enough to influence the fundamental decision before the planning pathway narrowed.

Sources: Casey PA23/0694 page; Casey Hampton Park Hill FAQ 2022

15. Planning Scheme Amendment C294 adds another layer

When Casey adopted the Hampton Park Hill Development Plan in July 2023, it also resolved to seek Ministerial consent to prepare and exhibit Planning Scheme Amendment C294. C294 proposed changes to the Special Use Zone and replacement of the Development Plan Overlay schedule to help implement the new Development Plan. That amendment process is relevant because it demonstrates that the statutory planning scheme had not yet been fully rewritten to implement the new strategic plan when PA23/0694 was lodged.

There is no basis at this stage to say that was unlawful. The existing Development Plan Overlay remained the operative control and Casey applied it. But the sequence is complicated enough to deserve a plain explanation. The old planning controls were considered outdated because they did not reflect the new State strategic direction. A new Development Plan was adopted. An amendment was proposed to implement it. Meanwhile, the existing overlay remained operative and was the mechanism that removed ordinary notice and appeal rights from the WTS permit application. For an ordinary resident trying to understand whether they could challenge the project, that is hardly a simple system.

Sources: Casey Planning Scheme Amendment C294

16. Casey approves the planning permit at the end of administration

Casey approved the planning permit in October 2024 as part of its statutory role as Responsible Planning Authority. The elected council had not yet returned to office. Casey's own later update says the permit was approved prior to the return of councillors. The 2024 local government elections were held on 26 October. The Victorian Electoral Commission declared Casey's 12 new councillors on 8 November, and the first special meeting of the new Council occurred on 19 November. Administrators still had lawful authority to make planning decisions before the elected Council returned. Nothing located so far establishes that the timing of the permit decision breached the Planning and Environment Act or the Local Government Act. It is nevertheless a striking end to the administration period. After more than four years without elected

councillors, a major and highly contested planning permit was determined just before democratic representation resumed. That timing was later criticised in Parliament.

The proper question is not to imply illegality. It is whether there was a statutory or administrative reason the decision had to be made then, and whether a matter of this significance could reasonably have waited for the incoming elected Council. The planning file should answer that.

Sources: Casey community update on WTS; Casey return to elected Council; Parliament of Victoria, 6 March 2025

17. The environmental warning signs were not new

The proposed WTS was not being assessed on a pristine industrial site with no history of conflict between waste activity and surrounding homes. The 2021 Hub Plan already identified buffer and residential encroachment issues. EPA later received a significant volume of odour complaints about the Hallam Road landfill during 2022 and 2023. EPA's civil enforcement case alleged breaches relating primarily to leachate levels and landfill gas management. Veolia ultimately admitted that it breached its operating licence and failed to manage risks of environmental harm so far as reasonably practicable. Those proceedings concerned the landfill, not the proposed WTS. They should not be confused. A landfill and an enclosed transfer station have different emissions, operations and controls.

But the history is relevant to community confidence. Residents were being asked to trust engineering controls for another major waste activity at a site where environmental management of the existing operation was already causing substantial impact.

Sources: EPA Veolia civil enforcement proceeding; EPA Hallam Road landfill history

18. The buffer problem becomes harder in 2024

In August 2024 EPA updated its separation distance guidance. For waste transfer stations, the recommended odour separation increased from 250 metres to 500 metres, while the dust separation remained 250 metres. Casey says it took the updated guidelines into account. It also says Veolia's proposal did not meet the new 500 metre recommended odour separation but that the guidelines allowed a variation where supported by a risk assessment. Veolia relied on that pathway. So it would be wrong to say Casey simply ignored the new EPA guidance. The applicant sought to justify a shorter separation through site specific assessment, which the guidelines allowed. The eventual environmental question was whether the controls and evidence were strong enough to make that shorter distance acceptable. EPA ultimately decided they were not.

Sources: Casey PA23/0694 buffers; EPA WTS decision

19. EPA receives 751 submissions and applies a different test

EPA's Development Licence process gave the community a different statutory forum. Public exhibition ran in late 2024 and EPA received 751 submissions. EPA also spoke with almost 100 people across three information sessions. This was not a rerun of the planning permit process. EPA was not deciding which South East site should host a regional transfer station. Hampton Park had already been selected by the proponent and had planning approval. EPA's task was to decide whether the proposed facility met the Environment Protection Act 2017. That distinction explains why some of the broader questions about site selection, land history and planning process could not be resolved by EPA. The regulator was assessing the environmental acceptability of the proposal placed before it.

For the community, however, the distinction between agencies is much less neat. Residents experience one project. Government experiences strategic planning, statutory planning, road infrastructure, waste

procurement, environmental licensing and land agreements as separate processes with separate legal boundaries. A process can therefore be lawful at every individual stage and still leave a community wondering where, exactly, the fundamental decision could ever have been changed.

Sources: Star News, EPA received 751 submissions; EPA WTS decision

20. EPA says no

In April 2025 EPA refused Veolia's Development Licence. EPA said its comprehensive, science based assessment found that the proposed Waste Transfer Station did not meet the requirements of the Environment Protection Act 2017. It identified unacceptable risks to human health and the environment, primarily from odour and noise emissions, and said that because of the close proximity to residential homes and other sensitive receptors those risks could not be reduced to acceptable levels. This is where years of planning met the environmental test. The site had State strategic significance. The WTS had years of project development behind it. Casey had rewritten the strategic planning framework. A commercial scale transfer station had been contemplated in that framework. Casey had issued a planning permit. Veolia had prepared extensive technical studies and proposed substantial engineering controls.

None of that bound EPA. The independent environmental regulator looked at the actual proposal and the actual relationship with surrounding sensitive uses and refused it. That does not prove the earlier planning decisions were unlawful. It does raise a legitimate policy question about sequencing. If proximity to homes ultimately produced environmental risks that could not be reduced to an acceptable level, why was that fundamental constraint not capable of eliminating the location much earlier in the process?

Sources: EPA WTS Development Licence decision

21. Veolia challenges EPA and VCAT upholds the refusal

Veolia exercised its right to challenge EPA's decision at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal. That review is important because it subjected EPA's refusal to independent merits review. If EPA had been too cautious, misunderstood the evidence or reached the wrong conclusion, VCAT could have decided differently. On 10 April 2026, VCAT upheld EPA's decision. The refusal stood. That makes it inaccurate to describe the final outcome as simply a political victory produced by community pressure. Community involvement was enormous and clearly important, but the decisive outcome was regulatory and legal. EPA refused the Development Licence and VCAT confirmed that refusal. It also makes the earlier history more, not less, worth examining. The final environmental safeguard worked. The obvious question is what can be learned from the years of strategic, commercial and planning work that came before it.

Sources: EPA, VCAT upholds refusal; City of Casey VCAT update

22. The landfill breaches matter, but for the right reason

In November 2025, the Supreme Court ordered Veolia to pay $1 million into an EPA restorative justice project account following the Hallam Road landfill enforcement proceeding. Veolia admitted it had breached its operating licence and failed to manage risks of environmental harm so far as reasonably practicable. The contraventions related primarily to leachate levels and landfill gas management during 2022 and 2023. This was not a penalty for the proposed Waste Transfer Station. It should never be presented as though it was. It matters because it validates the fact that the surrounding community's environmental concerns about the existing waste operation were not imaginary. It also helps explain why promises about future engineering controls were met with scepticism.

The $1 million is now being directed through EPA toward projects benefiting the environment and community around Hallam Road. That is a separate restorative process, but it is part of the site's history.

Sources: EPA civil enforcement proceeding; EPA Hallam Road restorative project

23. Cell 16 and the meaning of 'closure'

The landfill itself has not yet finished. EPA records that on 21 August 2025 it accepted Veolia's notification of intent to construct Cell 16, with detailed cell design documentation still requiring EPA approval. In June 2026 EPA also clarified that the site has held a permission to construct landfill cells since 21 May 2002. Veolia's current community material describes Cell 16 as west of Cell 15 and explains that it will use a separation lining system against older cells to help create the final landform. This matters because public discussion of 'closure' has often mixed several different concepts. Casey's 2022 FAQ said the planning permit allowed waste acceptance until 2040 but forecast physical capacity around 2032 at then current tipping rates. Veolia later publicly referred to the landfill closing by 2030. More recent reporting and Veolia material have indicated an earlier physical filling timeframe around 2028, while municipal waste arrangements can cease earlier again.

Those dates can coexist. A planning permit end date is not the same as physical capacity. Municipal contracts can end before the landfill is full. Final contouring can also require additional filling. But for a community repeatedly told that the landfill will close and be rehabilitated, the distinction should be explained clearly. Cell 16, remaining airspace, final contours, the end of municipal waste, the end of all active landfilling and the beginning of rehabilitation should be set out as separate milestones.

Sources: EPA Hallam Road landfill; Veolia Hallam Road landfill community updates; Casey Hampton Park Hill FAQ 2022

24. What we know, and what we still don't know

After putting the chronology together, many of the questions that initially looked unanswered are no longer mysteries.

What we know:

- Casey's older planning framework contemplated landfill closure, rehabilitation and significant public open space.
- Hallam Road became a waste and resource recovery hub of State importance.
- The Victorian Government's Hallam Road road works included traffic signals at the SUEZ waste precinct.
- A specific Hampton Park Waste Transfer Station project existed by late 2018 and progressed through design, pricing and technical investigation.
- The WTS project already existed when Casey considered the Hampton Park Landfill Land Agreements in February 2020.
- Casey then spent more than four years under State appointed administration without elected councillors.
- The 2021 Hallam Road Hub Plan called for Casey's planning framework to acknowledge and strengthen waste and resource recovery operations.
- By 2022 Casey had commissioned ARUP to assess the specific proposed transfer station at 290 Hallam Road.
- The new Hampton Park Hill Development Plan expressly supported development of a commercial scale transfer station.
- The community was consulted on that Development Plan. Casey received 1,068 submissions and the response was overwhelmingly opposed.

- By September 2022 Veolia was explicitly linking the Hampton Park Transfer Station with Maryvale Energy from Waste.
- Casey representatives attended the September 2022 Hallam Road Community Reference Group meeting at which the Development Plan and Veolia's detailed transfer station proposal and Maryvale role were discussed. EPA representatives were also present.
- Casey was one of the participating councils in SEMAWP and later acknowledged its dual roles as both a SEMAWP participant and the Responsible Planning Authority for the Hampton Park application. Casey says safeguards were used to separate officers involved in the procurement from officers considering the planning permit.
- The 25 year Waste Supply Agreement with the Maryvale consortium was entered into in July 2024.
- Veolia lodged PA23/0694 on 29 December 2023. Ordinary public notice, formal objection and third party appeal rights did not apply because of the Development Plan Overlay.
- Casey approved the planning permit in 2024, before elected councillors returned.
- EPA subsequently received 751 submissions and refused the Development Licence after finding unacceptable risks to human health and the environment, primarily from odour and noise.
- Veolia challenged EPA's decision and VCAT upheld EPA's refusal on 10 April 2026. The proposed Waste Transfer Station will therefore not proceed under that proposal.

That is a substantial amount that is no longer in dispute.

What we still don't know:

- What did the original 2018 SUEZ project brief and business case say about why Hampton Park was selected for the Waste Transfer Station?
- What exactly was being priced in 2019, and what commercial decision followed that pricing process?
- When did Hampton Park first become part of the proposed regional solution associated with SEMAWP and Maryvale?
- What did the original SEMAWP procurement documents say about transfer infrastructure, Hampton Park and the contingency if Hampton Park could not obtain its required approvals?
- What is the relevant contractual wording behind the subsequently reported statement that the regional agreement proceeded on the basis that Hampton Park would obtain the necessary permit to operate? I strongly call for that material to be released.
- What involvement did Casey's executive leadership have in SEMAWP and development of the regional waste solution, and what information about the proposed Hampton Park Transfer Station was provided to the CEO and administrators at each stage?
- What communications occurred between Casey's executive leadership, the Victorian Government, SEMAWP, SUEZ and later Veolia concerning Hampton Park before the formal planning application was lodged?
- When the 25 year Waste Supply Agreement was signed in July 2024, what assumptions did Casey's executive leadership understand had been made about the proposed Hampton Park Transfer Station obtaining its required approvals?
- What did Casey know about the developing WTS project when it considered the February 2020 land agreements, and did that knowledge have any bearing on those arrangements or the configuration of future public open space?
- Did any subsequent land or boundary changes materially affect separation distances between the proposed facility and surrounding sensitive uses?
- What assumptions about future waste operations and truck movements were contained in the original Hallam Road road upgrade traffic modelling?
- What is the complete chronology for Cell 16, remaining landfill capacity, cessation of municipal waste, cessation of active landfilling, final contouring, rehabilitation and eventual public access?

And there is one question sitting above all of them: when did the location of this facility genuinely remain open to change? Taken together, the documents show years of strategic, technical and commercial momentum before the formal permit application. They do not prove the outcome was predetermined. EPA's refusal proves it was not. They do leave a fair question: before EPA became involved, when could the community realistically have said, 'This is the wrong place', and had the location itself genuinely reconsidered?

25. The chronology in one place

The detail matters, but so does seeing the sequence without twenty pages around it.

- 2018: Hallam Road is identified as a waste and resource recovery hub of State importance. The Victorian Government commences the Hallam Road road upgrade, including traffic signals at the SUEZ precinct. By November, a specific Hampton Park Waste Transfer Station is being designed.
- 2019: The WTS progresses through further design, pricing and residential noise monitoring.
- February 2020: Casey considers land agreements affecting future public open space while the WTS project already exists. The following day Parliament passes legislation dismissing Casey's councillors.
- 2021: The Hallam Road Hub Plan calls for Casey's planning framework to acknowledge and strengthen waste and resource recovery operations.
- 2022: Casey commissions ARUP to assess the specific proposed transfer station. The draft Hampton Park Hill Development Plan expressly supports a commercial scale transfer station. The community responds with 1,068 submissions. By September, Casey, Veolia and EPA representatives are in the same Community Reference Group meeting where the Development Plan, the WTS and Maryvale are discussed.
- July 2023: Casey adopts the Hampton Park Hill Development Plan and seeks Ministerial consent to progress Planning Scheme Amendment C294.
- 29 December 2023: Veolia lodges PA23/0694. Because of the Development Plan Overlay, ordinary public notice, formal objection and third party appeal rights do not apply to the permit application.
- July 2024: SEMAWP enters the 25 year Waste Supply Agreement with the Maryvale consortium. Casey is a participating council. The State Government is later identified by Casey as having led the procurement through the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action.
- 2024: Casey, still under administration, approves the WTS planning permit before elected councillors return.
- 2025: EPA receives 751 submissions and refuses the Development Licence because it finds unacceptable risks to human health and the environment, primarily from odour and noise.
- 10 April 2026: VCAT upholds EPA's refusal.

The sequence does not prove a secret conspiracy or a fixed outcome. It shows years of strategic, commercial, procurement and planning momentum behind Hampton Park before EPA stopped the proposal. The central question remains: before EPA became involved, when did this community have a realistic opportunity to challenge the location itself?

26. The convenient answer was Hampton Park. The community paid the price.

After going through this history, my conclusion is simple. This looks like lazy and convenient planning. Hallam Road was already a waste precinct. The infrastructure and operator were there, State policy had identified it as strategically important, and the regional waste system needed somewhere to consolidate enormous quantities of waste. Hampton Park became the convenient answer. The inconvenient fact was

that established communities already lived around it. That should have been one of the first considerations, not something to be engineered around later with buffers, buildings, odour modelling and noise modelling. This was not a proposal that unexpectedly landed on Casey's desk in December 2023. A specific project was being developed from at least 2018. Design, pricing, noise monitoring, technical work, land arrangements, State strategic planning, the Hub Plan, Casey's Development Plan work and the regional waste solution all built momentum before the formal application arrived.

Whether that sequence was driven by State waste policy, Casey's planning decisions, the regional procurement, commercial requirements, or a combination of them, the result was wrong. Good planning should ask whether a major new waste operation belongs near established homes before years are spent working out how to make it fit. Instead, the process appears to have started with Hallam Road as an existing waste precinct and worked forward from there. That is convenient planning. When the convenience of government, councils and industry outweighs the surrounding community, I call it lazy planning too.

EPA eventually applied the environmental test and, after 751 submissions, refused the Development Licence because it found unacceptable risks, principally from odour and noise. Veolia challenged that decision and VCAT upheld the refusal. After years of work facilitating another major waste facility at Hampton Park, the process finally reached the point residents had been making all along: it was too close to the community. That should have been tested at the beginning, not near the end. There is also a political reality I will not ignore. This happened in safe Labor territory under a Labor Government. I cannot prove our voting history caused Hampton Park to be treated this way, and I will not pretend I can. But residents are entitled to ask whether a project like this would have gathered the same institutional momentum beside an established community in a seat a government was genuinely frightened of losing.

That matters because this Government is asking the same community to vote for it again on 28 November. Elections are not only about the promises made in the final months of a campaign. They are also about remembering what happened between elections. Read the documents, follow the dates and make up your own mind. The Government that presided over this period is entitled to ask for another four years. We are entitled to remember what happened.

27. The future of Hampton Park Hill

The Waste Transfer Station has been stopped. EPA refused the Development Licence and VCAT upheld that decision. That chapter is finished, but the future of Hampton Park Hill is not. That future is now very much in the hands of the City of Casey. At its June 2026 meeting, Casey's elected councillors decided to review the Hampton Park Hill precinct. Council says the review will audit the guiding planning documents, agreements and approvals relevant to the precinct and consider whether the current planning frameworks remain appropriate. An outcome is due back to Council by December 2026. Until then, the 2023 Hampton Park Hill Development Plan continues to apply. That review is an opportunity to do more than tidy up a planning framework after the failure of the Waste Transfer Station. It is an opportunity to reconsider the direction itself.

Long before Hampton Park Hill was being planned as an ongoing State significant waste precinct, Casey's own planning documents contemplated a different long term future. The quarry and landfill would cease operating, the land would be rehabilitated and significant public open space would follow. An operating landfill cannot become a park the morning after the last truck arrives. Rehabilitation is complicated and expensive. Landfill gas, leachate, capping, environmental monitoring and aftercare will continue for decades. Returning to the original vision also does not mean every legitimate existing use across the broader precinct simply disappears. But the fundamental direction can change. After everything documented in this retrospective, there should be a clear community expectation that Hampton Park Hill

does not quietly become the location for the next major waste proposal simply because previous strategic planning made it convenient to do so.

The communities surrounding Hallam Road have carried a substantial part of Melbourne's waste burden for decades. They have lived with the trucks, the landfill, odour, environmental incidents and the consequences that come with major waste infrastructure. At some point there should be a dividend for carrying that burden. Rehabilitating Hampton Park Hill and progressively returning as much of it as environmentally and practically possible to substantial public green space would be a pretty good one. Casey's review should therefore start with the original vision and ask how much of it can now be restored. The long term planning framework should prioritise rehabilitation, environmental improvement, protection of surrounding residential communities and significant public green space. The community should be involved from the beginning, while the direction is still capable of changing, rather than being invited back after another proposal has spent years being developed.

My expectation is clear. Go back to the original green space vision as the starting point. Work through the genuine environmental and technical constraints honestly. Protect the community from inappropriate future uses. Then progressively return as much of Hampton Park Hill as reasonably possible to the public. After decades of accepting everybody else's rubbish, that does not seem an unreasonable expectation. The future of Hampton Park Hill is now in Casey's hands. We will be watching. And this time, the community should be there from the start.

Sources: Casey Hampton Park Hill review; Hampton Park Development Plan v4.1