



Case Study

Soft Plastics Recycling in Altona

capire
Giving every person a voice.

PROJECT NAME

Soft Plastics Recycling in Altona

Client Licella

Time frame 6 months

Process Community Engagement

Audience Altona residents and environmental groups

PROJECT OUTLINE

Advanced recycling technologies to address Australia’s plastic waste.

Australia needs to significantly improve waste recovery for plastics to meet environmental challenges. One mechanism to achieve this is using advanced recycling technologies which can assist us to meet the national target of recovering an average of 80% plastics by 2030.

Licella is a global leader in the next generation of advanced recycling, hydrothermal liquefaction ('HTL'). Licella are currently developing a proposal for a HTL advanced recycling facility at the former Dow Chemical site in Altona, Victoria. Licella’s Cat-HTR™ technology can recycle End-of-Life Plastics, such as soft plastic, which are difficult or impossible to recycle with mechanical recycling.

Altona has had several waste and chemical businesses in the past, some of which involved environmental hazards. Considering this, Capire understood the community would be concerned about a new site and it was important to seek feedback and mitigate issues. To inform this, Capire designed and delivered an extensive, community and stakeholder engagement program.



Up to
120,000
tonnes processed at
the new site

PROJECT TEAM



Matthew Gordon
Project Manager
Capire



Astrid Ruban
Project Support
Capire



Steve Rogers
Project Director
Licella



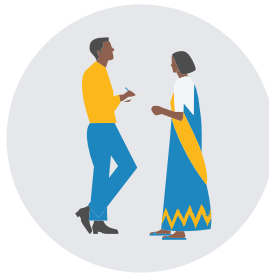
Andrea Polson
Communications Manager
Licella

“Capire really knew what they were doing. Importantly, they did what they said they were going to do and achieved a great result for us. The unique thing Capire brings is a team small enough to be flexible, but large enough to offer us a full service.”

– Steve Rogers, Project Director



Objectives



➤ Understanding

Build community awareness of the technology



➤ Determine the Benefits

Establish the technical, economic and environmental advantages of the site



➤ Identify Concerns Early

Understand community trepidation during the development stage



➤ Establish Issues

Engage with key stakeholders to determine what needs to be addressed in the development licence application process

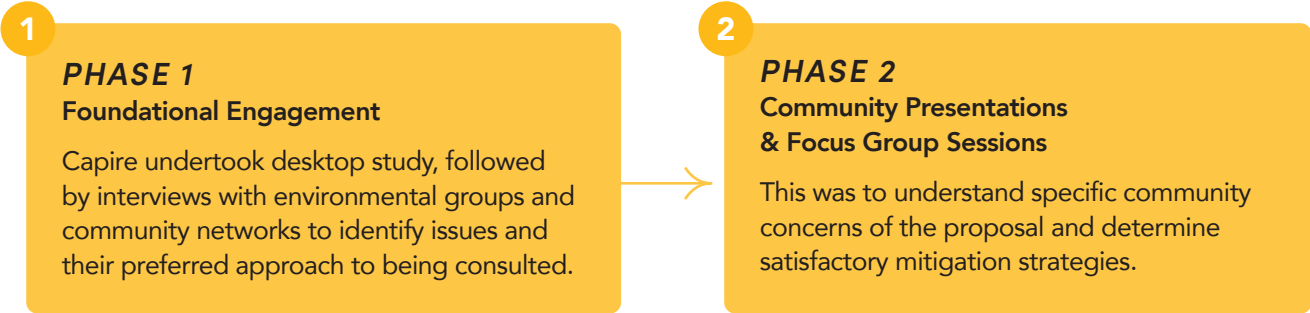


➤ Mitigate

Work with key stakeholders to alleviate community concerns.

Engagement Program

The engagement program was stepped out into two phases:



Capire interviewed a range of high-profile, specialist environmental advocacy groups. As experts, they helped us understand the likely issues felt by community. The groups were selected based on their reputable and broad reaching influence on recycling issues at local and national levels, and included:

- Boomerang Alliance
- World Wide Fund for Nature
- Australian Conservation Foundation
- Geelong Sustainability
- Environment Victoria

Capire then engaged relevant environmental groups and community groups proximate to the proposed site. The purpose of this preliminary engagement was to test interest and concern with advanced/ chemical recycling of soft plastics in general. Licella’s advanced recycling project was not specifically mentioned during the initial interviews.

Capire then selected the broadest possible range of community groups to engage on the project. Local community networks were selected based on their connections to the local community in Altona, their broad and diverse reach across communities and specific interest. They included:

- Hobsons Bay City Councillors
- Inner West Air Quality Network
- Friends of Stony Creek
- Somers Parade Kindergarten
- Altona Little Athletics
- Altona Badminton Club
- Altona Yacht Club
- Altona Tennis Club
- Altona East Phoenix Soccer Club
- Altona Laverton Historical Society
- Nature West

ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

Underpinning the engagement activities were three goals:

1. Build knowledge about the CAT-HTR™ technology and increase the community’s understanding.

2. Establish relationships between the community, Licella and planning authorities as a basis for trust.

3. Inform decisions about strategies that mitigate community concerns with the proposal.

COVID-19

The engagement approach was designed to ensure that activities could continue while maintaining safety standards.

- Workshops were held online via Zoom
- We ran phone ‘drop-in’ sessions for discussions
- A dedicated web and email inquiry service was set up.



RISKS AND MITIGATION

Capire left nothing to chance, implementing a comprehensive risk-based approach to the community engagement, ensuring no stones were left unturned.

Risk	Description	Mitigation
Poor community perception of the proposal	Historical issues about air quality and waste managed at Altona will create negative association for Licella	Capire developed key messages and communications material in line with “risk communication” principles that clearly conveyed and acknowledged community concerns.
Low levels of understanding	The Cat-HTR™ technology is complex, and it was challenging to break through pre-conceived notions of chemical recycling	Capire conducted an education campaign with independent experts publicly assessing the proposed technology. Capire developed materials that explained Licella and the technology in plain English, supported by visual materials and follow up conversations. Capire ensured people were provided ample time and multiple opportunities to engage in the technical detail.
Low trust in proposal	Trust in Licella is eroded as people don’t feel involved or heard in the process	Capire engaged with stakeholders early and ensured that people had time to process information and could make informed submissions.
Engagement conversations dominated by people pushing their own agenda	There were a variety of different stakeholders and community groups with polarising views and varied interests in the proposal	Capire used a range of techniques to provide participants different ways to contribute to face-to-face activities such as worksheets or dotmocracy (dot voting).
Proposal is political	Elected Councillors could use polarised community views on the proposal as political tool.	Capire facilitated one-to-one conversations with each Councillor to understand potential questions or concerns about the project. We provided briefing packs with accessible information

COMMUNITY QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

- *Have you operated a plant anywhere else in the world or in Australia?*
- *We are nervous about pollutants and new industries, why are you setting up in metro, why not outside of Melbourne?*
- *What is the nature of the product? Is it flammable? Will it burn?*
- *How will product be stored on site?*
- *Any odour emissions to be concerned about?*
- *Are there safety systems in place for catastrophic failure of the boiler?*
- *Is there gas emissions control?*

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Once community was informed, they were generally supportive of Licella's project and enthusiastic about tackling non-recyclable plastics, developing clean technology locally and improving environmental outcomes.

However, it is acknowledged that, despite implementing best practices, the new operation may present some risks and minor impacts to the local community. There were four main concerns:

- The air quality impacts from industry on the local community
- The impact road congestion and truck movements will have on public health and amenity
- The volumes of plastics still in circulation that end up in the environment
- The practicality and reliability of people taking their plastics to collection points for recycling and the manual extraction on assembly lines.

What's next?



Licella incorporated the community feedback into their development proposal.

Essentially, community influenced the design and operation of the proposal, ensuring smooth regulatory process.

Overall, Capire's engagement presented clear themes and highlighted for Licella the challenges they will need to address during the construction and commissioning phases of the project.

Education and ongoing community engagement will be essential throughout all subsequent stages of this project so that community are informed and up to date with the progress and the impact on community.

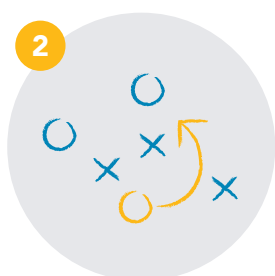
Throughout 2021, ongoing Covid-19 prevented Capire from meeting members of the community face-to-face. To ensure effective relationships are built with the community, Capire has recommended hosting a series of neighbourhood pop-ups and community events throughout 2022 to update community about the project.

Making an Impact



ESTABLISHING TRUST AND CREDIBILITY

Paramount to success was making sure the community had faith in Capire. Community engagement is about building healthy relationships at a local level. We listened. We made sure there was no imbalance of power.



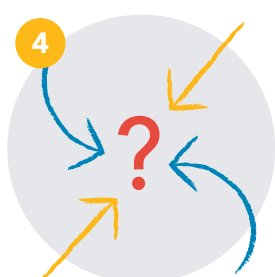
USING INNOVATIVE ENGAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

Capire removed barriers to participation to build understanding, provided various pathways to get involved and gave the Altona community a sense of ownership over the project.



GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND TO SPEAK TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE

Capire went the extra mile. We communicated with purpose, responding to residents' unique aspirations. When you let everyone have a say, the results are better, fairer and the community is more likely to accept change.



ADDRESSING THE ISSUES AND TACKLING THEM HEAD ON

Capire had real and frank conversations. We engaged constructively. We used our strategic insight to solve problems, build knowledge, grow influence, and produce positive outcomes.

“Capire brought real insights into dealing with community including the types of objections and challenges we were likely to face. They helped us acknowledge the risks and address the issues early. Capire’s experience dealing with community helped us tackle issues head on.”

– Mick Gaynor, Project Engineer

Ready to engage, learn and connect?

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Certified



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