

19 November 2020

Mr Greg Piper MP  
Chair – Public Accounts Committee  
Parliament of New South Wales  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir,

**AUDITOR-GENERAL'S PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT – DOMESTIC WASTE  
MANAGEMENT IN CAMPBELLTOWN CITY COUNCIL AND FAIRFIELD CITY  
COUNCIL**

I refer to your letter, dated 23 October 2020, requesting Fairfield City Council to provide the Public Account Committee further information in relation to three recommendations in the above report.

Please find attached Fairfield City Council's response. This response is reflective of Council's position and actions taken in relation to the audit recommendations.



Yours faithfully,



Brad Cutts  
**Director, Corporate Governance**

**Recommendation 1:**

Fairfield City Council should better measure and evaluate the effectiveness of their activities in improving residents' waste-sorting habits, in order to make adjustments as needed.

**Question from the Public Accounts Committee:** How does the Council intend to conduct ongoing monitoring of the effectiveness of improvements to residents' waste sorting habits?

**Fairfield City Council's response:**

*Fairfield City Council provides on-going educational activities in relation to correct recycling methods to the residents. Educational activities include letterbox drops of educational brochures, installing bin bay signage at multi-unit dwellings, on-site engagement with strata managers and face-to-face education with residents at properties with high contamination rates. Educational material is provided in a range of languages, to meet the needs of a culturally and linguistically diverse community (CALD).*

*Dedicated fulltime officers from Waste Sustainability conduct visual inspections to determine the contamination rates and level of waste production and to identify contamination hotspots. Information obtained is used to establish baseline data which then assists with the development of education programs, tailored to target the main contaminants (soft plastic, food, textiles), types of property Multi Unit Dwellings (MUD)/Single Unit Dwellings (SUD) and types of occupancy (owners, rental tenants, CALD community).*

*In order to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the education programs, Council staff conduct bin tagging and inspection campaigns for both MUD's and SUD's at regular intervals. Audit results of before and after are reported to Council in the Waste Strategy Divisional report and education campaigns are evaluated and modified as required.*

*Furthermore, every two years Council conducts a Kerbside Residual Waste Composition Audit for waste and recycling bins. Based on the results of the audit, education campaigns and programs are modified, to focus on the main contaminants (non-recyclable plastics, loose food, textile/rags).*

*Recently, Fairfield City Council has also become the delivery partner of Monash University and Behaviour Works Australia to deliver the behavioural change campaign through social media and field trials, targeting loose soft plastics, textiles and polystyrene foam products. The campaign measures the reactions through social media and the number of loose soft plastics in recycling bins are monitored and evaluated.*

**Recommendation 2:** Ensure all buildings have adequate and appropriate waste storage facilities, to make it easy for residents to sort their waste properly.

**Question from the Public Accounts Committee:** How does the Council ensure that all buildings have adequate and appropriate waste storage facilities?

The Council response notes that there are detailed waste management provisions within the Development Control Plan. Please provide more detail about how the current provisions ensure all buildings have adequate and appropriate waste storage facilities.

***Fairfield City Council's response:***

*Council has incorporated sections on the Waste Management Plan for multi dwelling housing (townhouses and villas - section 6A.7.6), residential flat buildings (section 7.7.1.1) and mixed used development (section 7.7.1.2) in the Fairfield City Wide Development Control Plan – Amendment No.22. These sections stipulate requirements for on-going waste management, including waste storage facilities and collection of waste.*

*All developments, which propose communal bin storage areas, such as residential flat buildings, boarding houses, townhouses and villas are assessed by the Waste Strategy team for on-going waste management plans that ensure appropriate on-site collection is available and there are adequate and suitable waste storage facilities in the buildings.*

*Council's Waste Strategy and Waste Operations teams, conduct on-site inspections for new buildings and work with Council planners, property developers and building management agencies, prior to issuing an occupation certificate or residents moving in.*

*Furthermore, Council employs a fulltime dedicated waste contamination management officer who works with developers, body corporates, strata management agents, building management agents and real estate agents in the local government area, in assisting setting up and maintaining the waste and recycling management systems in residential flat buildings.*

**Recommendation 3:** Obtain more information on the costs of other viable options for waste collection, transportation, processing and disposal, in order to determine if there is a need to change existing arrangements.

The Committee notes that the Council will not consider the issues raised in recommendation 3 until the current contracts for waste collection and processing have expired.

**Question from the Public Accounts Committee:** Could the Council provide reasons why you will not consider the issues raised in recommendation 3?

***Fairfield City Council's response:***

*Council has current contractual obligations that were procured following all Local Government Procurement guidelines and achieving cost efficiencies for Council in the processing and disposal areas, which prohibit Council agility in this area.*

*Council has a current long-term contract, which provides significant savings compared to market rates and any changes would burden ratepayers by directly increasing their domestic waste charge. The contract does not expire until 2025 and there is likely to be substantial changes in waste management during that time. Any work undertaken today, to consider a position that Council may adopt in 5 years time would be premature and most likely irrelevant, particularly with the present rate of industry change. This includes, COAG (proposed ban on the export of waste plastic, paper, glass and tyres), China Sword (ban from China on the importation of certain types of solid waste and strict contamination limits on recyclable materials), NSW 20 Year Waste Strategy discussion papers, differences in policy and regulation of waste management across Australia, proposals for waste to energy and capacity of current waste infrastructure.*

**Question from the Public Accounts Committee:** Will the Council consider the issues raised in recommendation 3 after the completion of the contracts in 2025? If so, can you provide a subsequent report to the Committee detailing how the Council will achieve value for money?

***Fairfield City Council's response:***

*Council will consider all relevant information including the costs of other viable options for waste collection, transportation, processing and disposal in order to determine the most appropriate waste management arrangement as will be required at the end of the current contract. Council would first need to receive appropriate reports and resolve a position to adopt an arrangement before a subsequent report could be prepared for the Committee.*