



Wednesday 28th of February, 2006

The Committee Member,
Standing Committee on Public Works
Municipal Waste Management
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

SUBMISSION INTO MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT

The Chair,

Solo Resource Recovery appreciates the opportunity to offer comment into the enquiry into Municipal Waste Management in NSW.

Background

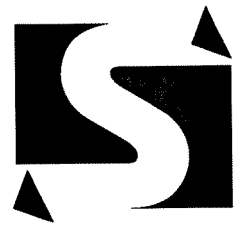
Solo Resource Recovery is a proud Australian company with a long and distinguished history of service to the community and waste industry. We provide and facilitate economic and technically advanced waste collection and processing systems throughout Australia. From our company history, which began in 1932 as a humble horse and cart service, we have continually developed technology, safety, and efficiency to create superior methods of waste minimisation, recovery, handling and disposal.

We have had extensive experience in practical waste minimisation systems and would like to offer comment on the following points in the scope of the enquiry:

1. The effectiveness and appropriateness of current municipal waste management.

Comment: Solo adopts and partners in "resource recovery" as one stream of an effective integrated approach in the minimisation of landfill, and the associated negative impacts. It should be noted that the most effective recycling practices draw a large initial capital outlay to achieve community acceptance. The added investment required to compensate for road upgrades, undercover facilities capable of housing large working machinery, land development, dust and visual environmental laws, and local government building and development standards, have a negating factor when comparing cost versus viability.

There are overwhelming environmental and social benefits to "best practice" waste management, however incentives should be made available so the long term viability of these projects can be undertaken. Currently, most municipal councils allocate their budgets on other community needs, and a more pro-active approach to waste management should be factored into community expectations. The commitment of current municipal waste management is fundamentally adopting "best practice" but is being manipulated by economic realities.



2. Impediments and incentives to best practice municipal waste management.

Comment: The major factor when considering and offering the highest efficiencies to waste management is the popularity and cost to the “end” user. Regional councils are responsible for the awarding and implementation of contracts in relation to waste removal, cartage and disposal. As previously mentioned, the initial cost of setting up high standard recycling centres is excessive, and can be seen as an additional burden on the ratepayer. The popularity and ongoing success of local government is dependent on popularity (which indirectly is gauged by rate increases).

Standardising the tendering process for local governments would increase the necessity for the adoption of best practices. The inclusion of professional services and measurable standards would greatly improve the overall success and acceptance of critical issues in waste management. The awarding of contracts based predominately on price should be stopped to allow legitimate operators the opportunity to increase the standards of these communities.

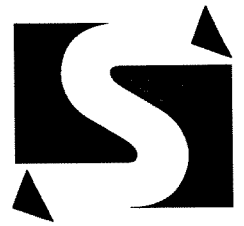
3. Best practice methods, including cost effectiveness, of planning and providing waste management services.

Comment: The generation of waste per location is quite specific to each individual set of circumstances. By adopting “best methods” it is implied that recycling would be the major performance indicator. By monitoring and comparing performance of waste @ “kilogram per head produced / kilogram per head recycled” in each location, all areas of acceptable management should be maintained.

4. The development of new technology and industries associated with waste management.

Comment: The quality and cost of our recycling will help generate more exports within the region however; industry development of recycled waste products should be promoted in the domestic market place. Strategies for alternate green waste usage should be considered as the market for mulches and ground cover are saturated in most areas. Research into regional soil conditioning, stock feeds, or agriculture needs should be undertaken. Alternative uses for water recycling that would reduce processing costs, and the strain on local sewerage treatment plants. EPA guidelines could be lowered to include reselling to drought affected areas for vegetation regrowth, parks and gardens, etc.

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5. Minimising harm to the environment in the provision of waste management services.

Comment: Standards should be formulated and included into the tendering processes for local authorities, with measurable evidence of the application to these standards. A "point system" to include waste minimisation strategies and environmental factors (rather than cheapest cost) when local authorities are awarding contracts should be adopted.

Community awareness programs and education should continue, including a more (adult) intellectual understanding of recycling. Please note there is a large section of the community who still believe all waste goes to landfill. The provision of Government funding, incentives, or partnering for business to undertake long term sustainable capital investments into recycling would greatly benefit individual municipalities and the state in achieving environmental strategies.

The company takes a pro active approach in being a good corporate citizen, and would like to be involved in any formulation strategies that improve Australia's environmental record. If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

Regards

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