



# CITY OF LITHGOW COUNCIL

Submission  
No 34

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Contact:

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The Committee Manager  
Standing Committee on Public Works  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

FAXED

Dear Sir

## **INQUIRY INTO MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT IN NSW**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission in relation to the Inquiry into Municipal Waste Management in New South Wales by the Standing Committee on Public Works. Please find the following comments on the issues being examined by the Inquiry, including details on the current waste management services provided in the Lithgow Local Government Area (LGA).

### Effectiveness and Appropriateness of Current Municipal Waste Management

The Lithgow LGA covers an area of 4,500 square kilometres with a population of 20,564. The area to population ratio of the LGA brings with it particular problems in trying to provide a cost effective best practice service. Furthermore, the community is very vocal about its desire not to 'import' any waste from another LGA's and to date Council has reflected this point of view in policy and practice.

The following points provide an overview of the current waste management services within the LGA.

- Council provides 7 landfills being located at Lithgow, Wallerawang, Portland, Angus Place, Cullen Bullen, Capertee and Glen Davis. Two landfills are operated in accordance with Environment Protection Licences (ie. Lithgow and Portland). Lithgow Solid Waste Facility is operated by a Contractor and is the only Facility which is supervised during operational hours. Wallerawang, Portland and Cullen Bullen Garbage Depots are unsupervised between 9am and 5pm. Access is soon to be restricted between the hours of 5pm to 9am at Angus Place and Capertee Garbage Depots.
- Council provides 3 transfer stations being located at Hampton, Meadow Flat and Tarana. This service is provided by a Contractor on behalf of Council.
- 8,524 kerbside garbage (240 litre mobile garbage bin) and 8,350 recycling (60 litre recycling crate) collection services are provided by Council's Contractor JR Richards and Sons Pty Ltd.

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- Council provides 5 kerbside domestic green waste collection services per year to residents of Lithgow, Lidsdale, Marrangaroo, Portland, Rydal and Wallerawang. In 2004/05, approximately 132 cubic metres was collected.
- Council provides 2 kerbside general clean up collection services per year for domestic premises within the local government area. In 2004/05, approximately 120 cubic metres was collected.
- In 2004/05, approximately 39,782 tonnes of waste was disposed of in landfill, which contributes to an increasing trend. However, these figures are estimates as there are no weighbridge facilities.
- In 2004/05, 753 tonnes of recyclables were collected from the kerbside recycling service. This contributes to an increasing trend.
- The Sydney Catchment Authority with assistance from Council provided a household chemical collection service which collected 1,974.5 kilograms of chemicals. This collection service is normally provided on an annual basis.
- The remaining operational lives of the landfill facilities vary from 1 year to 9 years.
- Council has lodged a Development Application for a new central Waste Management Facility at Blackmans Flat utilising an open cut mining void. The proposal includes the establishment of the Waste Management Facility; landfilling of solid and inert waste in the order of 35,000 to 40,000 tonnes per annum for a period of approximately 15 years and the storage and transfer of recyclables. The capital cost of the Facility is estimated at \$2 million. Upon the commencement of operations, all remaining landfills will be closed and rehabilitated.

Whilst the current landfills utilise 'old' methods, practices and technology, Council is facing different issues resulting from its intentions to close all landfill facilities upon the commencement of operations of the Blackmans Flat Waste Management Facility. These issues include:

- The community's expectation not to travel distances to visit the waste facility. The proposed Blackmans Flat Waste Management Facility is approximately 16 kilometres from Lithgow which is not a great distance when compared to other LGAs.
- The likelihood of residents having to pay to use the facilities.
- The potential for 'illegal dumping'.
- The rural community's opposition to kerbside garbage and recycling services.

In a response to these issues, Council is reviewing its Solid Waste Management Strategy. This review will focus on issues such as extensions to the kerbside garbage and recycling collection services; the frequency of greenwaste and clean up collection services; the need for transfer stations; and the use of 'RID' squads.

In relation to best practice approaches for municipal waste contracting, Council is supportive of the Department of Environment and Conservation's Model Waste and Recycling Contract. Although Council's current Garbage and Recycling Contract does not expire until 30 June 2009, Council will utilise the Model Contract and User Guide in considering any future waste and recycling services for the LGA.

Furthermore, at the time, Council will also explore the option of waste management services being provided by Council.

During its last garbage and recycling contract, Council experienced a difficult situation which resulted in the termination of the recycling component of the contract prior to its completion. The termination of recycling was attributed to occupational health and safety concerns of the workers at the materials recycling facility who were sorting through the recyclables from the spilt bin system (ie. 120 litre recycling and 120 litre garbage). Notwithstanding this experience, Council when deliberating on the current garbage and recycling contract, was keen to provide a recycling service. However, in its consideration it sought a service which would minimise any potential contamination issues and consequently resolved to pursue the crate system.

#### Best Practice Municipal Waste Management

Best practice waste management is a shifting target as technology improves and is tested. However, sometimes the legislation and guidelines quickly outdated. For example, the benchmark techniques for the design of waste management facilities in New South Wales are less onerous than the equivalent in Victoria.

The planning and implementation of best practice methods often requires a higher cost, however, best practice is what the community and government demands as it provides a level of confidence that the facility will operate in an environmentally satisfactory manner. These costs are ultimately passed on to the ratepayers as the Waste Fund only receives income from the annual waste levy charged to each property and any activities arising from the facilities which provides a source of income, eg metal recycling. The possibilities for achieving a reasonable income stream are sometimes more restricted in smaller regional areas.

#### Development of New Technology and Industries Associate with Waste Management

The development of new technology and enhancement of older technologies is ongoing in the waste management industry. However, the use of this technology can often be problematic in smaller communities due to the cost of a smaller scale plants such as advanced waste treatment facilities. Therefore, for smaller communities this technology needs to be proven to be effective. It also needs to be flexible enough to allow current systems to be utilised in the present and added to in the future.

In engaging with industry in resource recovery and recycling programs, it is noted that State Government owned Corporations and Agencies are leading by example. During 2005, approximately 10 industries in Lithgow were involved in the Cleaner Production Program. This resulted in the industries undertaking audits of their facilities to provide a cleaner method of production and save money in the longer term. A key issue to come out of this Program was the necessity for a local industry recycling program and this is another issue which Council will consider in the review of its Solid Waste Management Strategy.

#### Minimising Harm to the Environment in the Provision of Waste Management Services

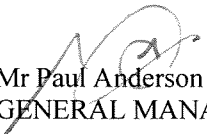
Protection of the environment is vital in providing waste management services. To this end, Council's waste management costs have increased as a result of Environment Protection Licence conditions, changes to practices and

construction/installation of infrastructure to minimise potential harm to the environment from its facilities.

The importance of protecting the environment was most evident during the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Blackmans Flat Waste Management Facility. This Facility once constructed will have a liner system which exceeds the benchmark requirements in New South Wales.

I trust that the above information has been assistance to the Inquiry and once again thank you for the opportunity to participate.

Yours faithfully

  
Mr Paul Anderson  
GENERAL MANAGER