



**BURWOOD COUNCIL**

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*Red 29/03/06.*

Public Works Committee  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

File No: G-10  
Folio: 1.2006.29201  
Enquiries: H.Gavrilis

22 March 2006

Dear Sir

Inquiry into Municipal Waste Management

Reference is made to your letter of 30 January 2006 inviting submissions to be made to your Inquiry into Municipal Waste Management in NSW.

Council considered the matter at its meeting of 28 February 2006 and has resolved to make a submission, a copy of which is attached.

Council trusts that the issues raised will be given due consideration and looks forward to the release of the findings of the Committee.

Yours faithfully

Harry Gavrilis  
**MANAGER ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH**

## **Inquiry into Municipal Waste Management in NSW**

### **Submission by Burwood Council February 2006**

#### **Background**

Waste management is a key function of Local Government Authorities (LGAs) and is a direct action aimed at maintaining public health.

Waste management practices have evolved significantly over the past twenty years due primarily to the automation of collection systems and environmental concerns including the recognition of the fact that the existing quantities of waste that were and are being collected and disposed of were and are unsustainable.

There concept of waste minimisation through recycling and material recovery has developed, and is now considered an essential part of any municipal waste management strategy.

#### **Discussion**

The separation of waste streams has been implemented by LGAs due primarily to the need to reduce waste and in response to community expectations. For every new waste stream that is added there is additional costs related to plant and equipment and there is also environmental consequences created through having additional vehicles carrying out additional collection services.

The costs have been absorbed by the LGAs and are ultimately passed on the ratepayer.

Up until recent times there has been a virtual monopoly on tipping facilities and costs and LGAs had no control over rising costs attributed to tipping fees.

Further, the State Government has imposed a waste levy which is aimed at encouraging LGAs and their communities to reduce quantities waste being transported to landfill. This levy has been ineffective and the majority of income that has been derived has been directed to other Government expenditure. This situation has recently been reviewed and there has been an announcement about a more equitable system for the distribution of the levy that is collected. The details are yet to be finalized however LGAs are to receive some funds through a rebate system.

While communities and LGAs have moved to embrace improved waste and recycling services, the producers and industries that derive the benefits of the returned material, at a subsidized rate, have not been as forthcoming in contributing to the recycling collections.

Responsibility for the collection and return of the recycled material is perceived to rest completely with LGAs and the communities they serve while the producers and industries which make and sell the materials remain free of any responsibility.

The National Packaging Covenant which is an agreement between the packaging industry and LGAs aimed at working voluntarily to reduce packaging materials, has been rejected by the Local Government and Shires Association as being inadequate

## **Issues**

### **Current waste collection practices:**

There is an exaggerated reliance on LGAs to accept all responsibility for delivering effective waste management services to their communities.

Extended producer responsibility (EPR) should apply to the manufacturing and packaging industry to provide a direct product return route from the consumer to the producer of the material.

Container deposit legislation is just one element of a comprehensive product return service. Also the compulsory acceptance of unwanted white goods by stores and manufacturers is another example.

Responsibility for return and recycling of packaging materials should be shared by those that derive the benefit of the product, that is, the manufacturer and the consumer. It should not be left solely to LGAs to assume full responsibility for the collection and return of the packaging materials / products to the manufacturer.

These simple measures will also reduce the incidence of littering and will have manufacturers designing less wasteful packaging.

### **Alternate waste technology:**

The development of effective alternate waste technology is critical in producing significant waste reduction. Organic matter including food and green waste make up the majority of municipal household waste.

The development of a closed loop process which produces energy and usable or nil residual material on a large enough scale would eliminate the waste concerns in the greater metropolitan area.

Hi -Tech incineration, while politically undesirable, is another alternate waste solution that should be investigated and considered. This technology has been successfully adopted in Europe and should not be dismissed out of hand without being properly investigated.

## **Conclusion**

The delivery of an effective waste management service to a community has become more complex over the years and there is an expectation that Local Government Authorities will automatically adapt to provide the service.

Local Government Authorities are regularly scrutinized in relation to rising costs. This is exacerbated by the expectation that increased recycling and recovery services will be provided by LGAs.

It is only reasonable to expect that manufacturers and producers have a legislated responsibility in relation to recycling and resource recovery.

End.