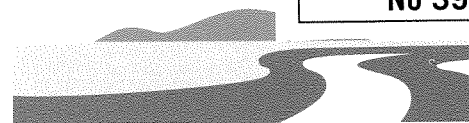


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**EUROBODALLA SHIRE COUNCIL**

*Good Government, better living*

21 March, 2006

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

Dear Mr Green,

## **MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT IN NSW SUBMISSION**

Thank you for the invitation to make a submission on the inquiry into Municipal Waste Management in New South Wales. Our experience in the Eurobodalla has shown that each council has differing circumstances and each council needs to customise the waste management system to meet the needs of the community, including the commercial sector. Eurobodalla has worked with councils regionally on waste management issues and find even with the councils that have similar demographics, the different needs of the community, differing levels of infrastructure, access to transport and markets, generation of differing waste types and quantities make it difficult to find a single method of managing waste that suits the needs of each council area. Often a regional solution to a waste management issue involves a variety of methods to cater to the individual council's needs.

To assist in your inquiry council will address the issues that you have highlighted individually.

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

Eurobodalla Shire Council currently contracts the waste and recycling collection services. Council also manages three waste facilities, this includes one transfer station and landfill site operated by Council and one landfill site with the daily operations undertaken by a contractor. Council provides a domestic waste and recycling collection to over 85% of the households in the Shire. The remaining residents live on rural properties and are remote from most utility services. Each household that is on the Council service receives a weekly 80L garbage collection, fortnightly 240L recycling collection, monthly bin and bundles garden organics collection and an annual junk collection. With the junk collection, metal items are collected separately and recycled. Council is working towards recycling other recoverable goods from the junk collection. Including the cost of collection, disposal and education the waste and recycling collection service is \$195 per year, or \$3.75 per week for each household. An additional Waste Management Charge of \$26.45 applies to

The most difficult issue for council to address is improving waste management practices in the commercial sector. Council has little control to encourage businesses to recycle even with a pricing differential of \$28 per tonne for recycling material and \$93 per tonne for waste. To date this has not been a sufficient incentive to drive businesses to recycle. Recycling collection services for businesses are available in the Shire but uptake of the service is slow.

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

Eurobodalla Council aims to achieve best practice methods in a cost effective way. Council have been able to effectively implement best practices methods in the domestic waste and recycling collection services, the planning and implementation of the service was assisted by guidelines developed by the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC).

In terms of best practice methods in managing landfills this is a much more difficult area to achieve best practice due to the differing nature of each landfill. There are documents released by the DEC that outline the objectives that waste facilities should meet, but Council need to determine the solutions to meet these objectives. This planning process can be quite time consuming and demanding on the limited resources available to regional councils. There is an opportunity to develop a planning assessment tool for best practice principles for landfill management, as the DEC have done with the Alternative Waste Technology Tool.

The trend of the industry to move towards resource recovery has to some extent left a gap in landfill management. Eurobodalla has felt this pressure and its focus to keep up with state resource recovery targets has taken efforts away from improving landfill management. A State strategy should look at integrated waste management solutions that cover both landfill management and resource recovery together and not isolate these into different areas.

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

Council support the development of new technologies and industries that improve waste management but also have a responsibility to keep waste management affordable to the community. The most concern Council has is the risk associated with the new technologies that are yet to be proven, particularly when Council is required to enter into a 15 to 25 year contract and during this time the nature of waste could change. Council has conducted its own investigations into alternative waste treatments (AWT) and generally has found that the Shire struggles to generate the quantities required to make AWT viable. Consolidation of the Shire's material with neighbouring councils is a possibility but potentially transport cost will impede the operation due to the distances between the councils.

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

Council is aware of the onflow affect it has on the environment in providing waste management services and attempts to minimise these impacts.

Of great concern to Council is the hazardous materials that enter the landfill. Council has little control of preventing these substances entering the landfill as they are generally collected from kerbside collections.