

SOUTHERN WASTE STRATEGY AUTHORITY

16 January 2006

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Waste Generation & Resource Efficiency Inquiry Productivity Commission
LB2 Collins Street East
MELBOURNE VIC
8003

Dear Sir/ Madam,

SUBMISSION TO WASTE INQUIRY

Please accept the enclosed submission to the Commission's inquiry into waste generation and resource efficiency.

The Southern Waste Strategy Authority is a regional local government authority involved in policy, public awareness and performance monitoring activities in Southern Tasmania, with our member councils delivering the actual waste management services.

The submission comprises our Waste Minimisation Manual, which is a series of papers' detailing our role and our long term and short term strategies across a broad range of regional' waste minimisation activities. The papers relate directly to the Terms of Reference of the inquiry and may be downloaded in pdf format from the Publications page of our website www.southernwaste.com.au.

Some of the key concerns of local government, given, its role in the, delivery of waste management; services are summarised briefly below:

- Arbitrary target setting by other arms of government, without regard to the resources available and without contributing significant resources.
- The sterile notion that there is; any set of 'best practices' that can be applied across the diverse regions of Australia.

- Cost shifting onto local government, which generally operates within tight monetary constraints, imposed by state governments.
- The lip service that has so far been paid with respect to industry contributions to waste management costs. For example the National Packaging Covenant (which this organisation has supported) provides up to \$4M annually versus the costs of domestic kerbside recycling borne by local government of some \$200M. There is no effective industry contribution for the remaining 90% of waste which is recycled/ disposed.
- The notion that local government is responsible for cleaning up everyone else's mess, rather than placing this responsibility onto the waste generator. This results in other arms of government 'solving' the problem by simply setting, targets for local government.
- The assumption that 'data collection' is the responsibility of local government, without regard to the costs of data collection, the absence of systems required to gather the data, and the increased privatisation of the industry.
- Resistance from waste industry collection contractors to the introduction of recycling services for the commercial and industrial sectors.
- The virtual monopoly that exists within recycling re-processors, resulting in depressed prices, and leading to an -increasing export trade in recyclable, materials.
- The persistent (but these days, usually, outdated) notion that local governments do not charge full cost recovery for waste services. This has been used as an excuse for the imposition of waste levies, with the majority of these funds used to support state government bureaucracies or lost to consolidated revenue, instead of being used for improved waste management.

Please contact me if you require any further explanation.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Griffiths
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER