

enquiries refer

John Truman

in reply please quote

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19 October 2017

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Submission on the Waste and Recycling Industry in Australia

Ballina Shire Council is located in the Northern Rivers of the Far North Coast of New South Wales. It covers an area of 485 km² with a population of approximately 43,000. We have a prosperous economy based on building, retail, tourism, hospitality, agriculture and education.

Council own and operate the NSW EPA licensed Ballina Waste Management Centre. Due to a number of circumstances, landfilling activities have ceased and the site essentially operates as a transfer station.

Council offers the following response to the following specific Terms of Reference:

- ***the quantity of solid waste generated and the rate of diversion of solid waste for recycling;***

The NSW government have set waste diversion targets to be met by 2021. Any diversion rates (whether state or federal) should consider the significant challenges facing regional areas in meeting these targets. Distance to resource recovery facilities and the small quantities of material generated mean that many of these options are not currently financially viable.

- ***the destination of material collected for recycling, including the extent of material reprocessing and the stockpiling of collected material;***

The value and cost of reprocessing recycled material is largely based on the commodities market. The introduction of industry levies for the use of virgin material where a suitable recycled alternative exists may incentivise the technological improvement necessary to improve the quality of recycled material to meet market specifications.

- ***the current economic conditions in the industry, including the market for material collected for recycling;***

Greater financial incentives are necessary to encourage industry to increase the use of recycled material. There are limited options for many of the products that we currently recycle.

The recent announcements from China to tighten controls on the importation of recycled materials under the National Sword 17 program further highlight that Australia would be wise to investigate alternative local technologies for existing waste and recycle streams.

- ***the transportation of solid waste across state boundaries;***

Any discussion regarding the transportation of solid waste across state boundaries must be mindful that in almost every state, the council areas in close proximity to state borders are small regional centres that may not have the appropriate resources or infrastructure to manage their waste and recyclables in-house. The nearest or most appropriate facility may be located in another state.

Ballina Shire Council is concerned that potential measures to stop the unnecessary and in many cases unlawful disposal of waste over large distances interstate, may inadvertently affect the small regional centres within 150 km of the border.

Many local landfills are coming to the end of their operational life. Coastal land development pressure and stringent environment protection requirements mean that very few local landfills can and will be constructed in the future. The most sustainable model is to utilise large regional landfill hubs that service the wider community, this may include local communities from across state boundaries.

- ***the role of different incentives and collection methods in determining the quality and quantity of material collected for recycling;***

The value and cost of reprocessing recycled material is largely based on the commodities market. The introduction of industry levies for the use of virgin material where a suitable recycled alternative exists may incentivise the technological improvement necessary to produce a higher quality recycled material.

If we can assist the Inquiry by providing further information, please contact me

Yours faithfully

John Truman
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