

Email: eca.sen@aph.gov.au

Submission: Management of Australia's waste streams review

Mr Andrew Grant

Director
Dynamic Commercialisation Pty Ltd
L2 22 Grenfell Street
Adelaide SA 5000

Capacity of submission: Consultant within the waste industry

Management of Australia's waste streams, with particular reference to:

- a. trends in waste production in Australia across household, consumer, commercial and industrial waste streams;
- b. effectiveness of existing strategies to reduce, recover or reuse waste from different waste streams;
- c. potential new strategies to reduce, recover or reuse waste from different waste streams;
- d. the economic, environmental and social benefits and costs of such strategies;
- e. policy priorities to maximise the efficiency and efficacy of efforts to reduce, recover or reuse waste from different waste streams; and
- f. consideration of the [Drink Container Recycling Bill 2008](#).

Submission responses preamble:

Over the past 30 months I have worked within the waste industry primarily in business development for a food waste recycling solution provider, commercial composter and a biodegradable and compostable plastics supplier.

Over this time I have travelled throughout Australia meeting with each piece of the waste supply chain, from public and private landfills and commercial composting facilities, to waste management companies, to producers of waste from fast food chains to schools, to food manufacturers to livestock producers.

The views expressed below are those of mine and do not represent the companies for which I have consulted.

- a) Trends: increasing consciousness and willingness of food waste producers to undertake food recycling, usually ahead of councils and the government regulation. For example, in Brisbane I have had many enquiries about recycling food waste, but in speaking with groups such the Brisbane City

Council and other potential supply chain partners (transfer station operators required to make the service economically viable) this is some time off, which usually leads to no solution being implemented as governments/councils are not ready.

- b) Many existing strategies are very effective in the waste management industry and some waste companies (more so than others) genuinely are focussed on recycling not “holes in the ground” (landfill).

The banter that local councils and the packaging industry throw out at the CDL is ludicrous and their excuses such as “too much on infrastructure” are merely personal interest driven not consumer/society driven. (more on CDL below).

The government needs to look beyond the simplistic view of: waste from site to landfill and methane flaring. Those days are gone.

Lifecycle analysis on all waste streams needs to take place; and government needs to be accepting that increasing recycling rates and driving toward zero landfill will cost money.

The example of food waste being recycled and turned into soils conditioner is such a no brainer yet government still sits on its hands when it comes to blanket levies on landfilling certain waste streams. Compost retains moisture, increases yield and enhances the overall ecosystem, why not put a rebate on using recycled compost against water usage?

- c) Potential new strategies

- Levy organics/green waste to landfill at \$100 a tonne; use the funds for Waste to Resource fund for new technologies, and initiatives, not to fund the EPA/state gov/other non environmental causes>> which are slow boast to China.
- Run audits and subsequent mandates for local councils (who in turn tie them into their contracts) to have certain organics tonnages recycled or face “fines” (again for the Waste to Resource fund)
- Provide a CDL calibre arrangement for organics; rebate on tonnes recycled products (this could come from the green waste landfill levy)
- Tie in private industry with local and regional councils (many are run like “old boys clubs” and have no zest/drive/passion/limited drive for innovation and limited consequence for no innovative action, to make real change and recycle more
- Provide a LGA public website that all aussies can look at to compare performance, and so that councils can compare their level of recycling (everyone likes a competition and nothing like a Council CEO to see where they are at and get up their respective waste management company to lift its game)
- Develop a “waste to resource” fund for new technologies. Most of the technologies and projects I have seen are tied up with “old school” players who know the councils (*“my kids wen to school with your*

kids”), or organisations are too dismissive to “have a crack”. Funding from government to get new solutions into play especially with such technologies as gasification etc will be imperative to create a value chain on the back door not just the front (front door means waste management companies)

- Set up a waste management team within government that work purely with each states councils and companies to make things happen. The amount of time I hit the EPA brick wall “we haven’t got legislation for that yet”, that’s too hard, we’re working on that (for 3 years with still no outcome etc) etc is a continuum. Get some action takers in there and do things quick (something the Labour government has done bloody well....and that’s coming from a Liberal voter!)
 - Blanket legislation on green waste: the solutions are their. Composting is a simple process. You need land. Every councils, city etc has land somewhere and the rest is good management (followable via a handbook) and mother nature. Infrastructure costs are minimal and the return impact is huge. Various figures have been bounced around but the figure I jump on is 40% of the waste stream is organics, couple this with biodegradable and compostable packaging and say 60% of the waste stream could go to composters to be put back on the land and help the environment! Think big, think 2015, think your kids kids, set the standards.
 - Blanket % of biodegradable and compostable packing for certain goods/industries but provide seed funding (eg for all flights in Australia the goods consumed must use biodegradable and compostable packaging.
- d) CBA on the above. I’m sure many a waste management company would argue their holes in the ground are by far the best solution for everything. Councils will whinge, companies will complain and the packaging teams will march in disgust but lets look beyond that.
- e) Policy priorities.
- Food waste and green waste complete ban from landfill
 - a. Quick, easy, mother natures doing most the work
 - b. Cost Per tonne landfill deferral rate is low
- f) E Policy and the Drinks Container Recycling Bill
- Have a look at SA
 - i. I grew up here and have been recycling bottled and cans as long as I can remember
 - Now have a look at QLD>>> councils whinge and complain and cry. Look at the facts. It works, it can be incorporated into existing systems and it makes a difference.

Thank you for your time.

