

State Planning Strategy 2020 – Comment on Discussion Papers

Waste

The lack of consideration for waste management infrastructure in the State Planning Strategy 2010 is a concern for Local Government. With a projected increase in population and development in Western Australia, tonnes of waste generated will also increase.

In response to State Government direction, Local Governments and Regional Councils are looking for ways to divert waste from landfills. Local Government provides a large range of waste management services which can be classified into collection, processing, disposal and education. As defined in the *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act (2007)*, Local Government is responsible for “local government waste” which is defined as:

- (a) *waste from residential sources; and*
- (b) *any other waste of a kind prescribed by the regulations for the purposes of this paragraph, but does not include sewerage or waste of a kind prescribed by the regulations as excluded for the purposes of this definition.*

Although the *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act (2007)* clearly defines who is responsible for Municipal Solid Waste (or “local government waste”), other waste streams (such as Commercial and Industrial, and Construction and Demolition) do not have a directly responsible body. As a result, for example, in the non-metropolitan area Local Government often provides many or all of the waste management services (both commercial and domestic).

In the metropolitan area household waste is managed by Regional Councils who are made up of a number of member Local Governments in their region. The Regional Councils were formed to undertake a regional waste management service. An example of these services includes the development of Alternative Waste Treatment (AWT) facilities, which all of the Councils have, or are in the process of developing. These facilities treat the organic fraction of household waste (including food/garden waste and paper), and turns it into compost. As a result, these facilities divert substantial tonnes of material from landfill to beneficial uses. Currently, the approvals process for the planning of an AWT facility can take between 5 and 7 years, with a total cost of \$100 million each. This is significant infrastructure which provides an essential service for the health and wellbeing of Western Australian communities and the environment. The encroachment of residential developments on buffers around waste treatment facilities (including AWT’s and landfills) also means that Local Governments are finding it more difficult to carry out these services. As encroachment increases, so does public concern about these facilities. Without consideration of these concerns in strategic infrastructure planning, the ongoing provision of these basic services is in jeopardy. Siting of landfill facilities is another area which will require consideration at a strategic planning level.

A lack of understanding of waste management needs (provided by Local Government or the private sector) means that this industry is not adequately represented on committees such as the Infrastructure Coordinating Committee or in the development of the State Planning Strategy 2010.

Recommendations:

1. **That the Department of Planning considers the planning concerns of waste management in the development of the State Planning Strategy 2010.**
2. **That the Department of Planning coordinates a small committee to initiate discussions of the inclusion of waste management considerations in planning documents. This committee should include representatives from the Waste Authority, the Waste Branch of the Department of Environment and Conservation, the Waste Management Association of Australia (WA), the Forum of Regional Councils and WALGA.**