

Alternative Waste Treatment Workshop

**Held, Friday 4 December 2009
Town of Vincent
244 Vincent Street, Leederville**

Workshop Scope

The workshop looked at the range of alternative waste treatment technologies (including biological and thermal treatments).

Workshop Context

This workshop was held in the context of developing comments on the draft State Waste Strategy, a number of Regional Councils either having AWT facilities or planning them, and increasing discussions in the waste industry and wider community on alternative waste treatment (including thermal technologies).

Workshop Aim

The aim of the workshop was to:

- Inform the audience of the work currently underway;
- Gather input to inform the WA Local Government Association Submission on the State Waste Strategy; and
- Identify what support WALGA and other stakeholders can provide.

Attendees

Most attendees were Local Government and Regional Council officers and elected members. Also present were community reference group members, representatives from the Waste Management Association of Australia and Curtin University.

Speakers / Panel members

Rebecca Brown – WALGA
John King – Chair, WMAA AWT Working Group
Melanie Cave – Freehills
Steve Fitzpatrick – EMRC
Sarah Mullins – Curtin University

Group Discussion

The questions were discussed in small groups.

What are the drivers for AWT for Local Government in WA?

- State government Policy/Position - no more landfills on Swan Coastal Plain and Zero Waste 2020;
- Community expectation/awareness of environmental issues (e.g. Climate Change);
- Economic value of resources (and minimising costs);

- Local Government – awareness of AWT, working as community representative;
- Education of young people regarding waste;
- Risk management;
- Lack of landfill space (1. conserve remaining space 2. includes transport costs – proximity principle);
- Social value – not land filling resources;
- Maximize resource recovery;
- Changing view of waste as a resource;
- Groundwater contamination by landfill;
- Emissions trading (ETS / CPRS) and landfill levy versus AWT costs;
- Lack of resources;
- Large volume of waste produced / high consumption;
- Technology improvements;
- Regional councils;
- Intra/ inter generational / global equity;
- Green / sustainable technology investment;
- Cost of post closure management of landfills; and
- No drivers in non metro areas.

What inhibitors are there for AWT?

- Initial and operational costs;
- Distance from resources;
- NIMBY;
- Community perceptions (especially of thermal technologies);
- Lack of proven technologies and information;
- Fear of change;
- Health risks (or perception of risk);
- State and local government indecision;
- Lack of government policy framework;
- No funding for infrastructure;
- Lack of recognition of waste as an essential service;
- Lack of Container Deposit Systems;
- Lack of state government leadership;
- Low cost of landfill;
- Lead time (7-10 years);
- Research and Development costs;
- No provisions in Metropolitan Region Scheme;
- High cost of monitoring for compliance;
- Compost quality control;
- Difficulties in siting plants (especially thermal); and
- Encroachment into buffer zones.

What support would you find useful from WALGA, Waste Management Association etc?

- Improved information – indicative costs, technology options (industry associations);
- Research on products and markets;
- Advocacy for climate change in Local Government regulations on procurement when dealing with more complex projects (a project specific approach for AWT);
- Lobbying for co-coordinated framework for metro areas;
- Ongoing and increasing advocacy for the need to change (i.e. focus change from landfill to AWTs);
- Policy responses and developing policy which leads the sector, prompts government action;
- More integration with tertiary institutions – and the studies are used to inform projects;
- Support for Regional Councils when doing public consultation;
- Coordinated research approach;
- Integration of AWTs into land use planning;
- Standardized / coordinated community education, and more of it;
- WMAA – communication of research and information;
- Data / consistent / integrity available to all Local Government;
- Define lead body for advisory role;
- Facilitate regional co-ordination;
- Comprehensive education for councils and community (advertising);
- Networking events – like today, also for elected members;
- Technical and economic comparison of technologies available to LG/RC;
- Include support for Forum of Regional Councils (FORC);
- Create a centre for research (source of advice for LG, centre of excellence for waste management);
- Need to take needs of non – metropolitan area into account (smaller scale, locally specific projects, regions offering a certain service to neighboring areas – economy of scale);
- WALGA / WMAA involvement in international associations who have more experience – to gain further information;
- Look beyond municipal waste to other streams (eg C&I) – especially in non metro LGs who deal with all waste streams;
- Angle of looking at waste as “waste” vs “wasted resource”; and
- Integrated management needed.

What support for AWT is needed from the State Government?

- More positive ‘specific’ support for waste to energy (Local Governments should not have to bear it themselves);
- Financial support for Research & Development;
- Stronger direction on siting (buffers, planning);
- Infrastructure co-ordination committee to include AWTs;

- Leadership (political);
- Changes to tender regulations for Local Government;
- Establish waste management as an essential service and needs to be addressed in land use planning, emphasis on waste as a resource;
- Use of landfill levy to fund AWT;
- Projections on amount of waste likely to be generated in future;
- CDS and EPR for more products;
- Legislation to reduce packaging;
- Funds and legislation to improve recycling infrastructure;
- Deconstruction designed into products;
- Integrated AWT strategy for whole state;
- Centralised facilities to include economy of scale for AWT residue and subsidies so all Local Governments can access it;
- Incentive for renewable power from AWTs;
- Guidelines for AWT emissions;
- Clarification of acceptable AWT technologies;
- Funding;
- Streamlined approvals process, single government desk;
- More credible state body to advise on AWT;
- Well resources Waste Authority to work with Local Government;
- Policy drivers (incentives and penalties);
- State not involved in detail of AWT, but clear approvals process; and
- Co-ordination between state government departments (DPI, WAPC, EPA).

What does the State Waste Strategy need to include on AWT?

- Encourage movement away from landfill to AWT;
- Realistic targets (70% MSW diversion is not!);
- Detail on what State will do to manage own waste to best practice;
- Info/ detail about previous strategies (not just list);
- Detail about what will happen when landfills closed – within 10 years;
- Information about financial backing of strategies;
- More information about AWT and AWT for all waste streams – not just municipal;
- Information about what AWT currently operating in WA;
- AWT for C & I and C & D – equity in application; and
- Funded implementation of all SWS strategies.