



Parliament of Tasmania

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE

ENVIRONMENT, RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT

WASTE MANAGEMENT IN TASMANIA

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Introduction

1.1 APPOINTMENT AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Joint Standing Committee on Environment, Resources and Development was re-established following a trial period from 7 April 2004 and again on 30 May 2006 following the State Election on 18 March. The Committee adopted the following terms of reference at its meeting on 15 June 2004.

To investigate and make recommendations to the Government concerning domestic, industrial and hazardous waste management, with particular reference to -

- (1) whether Tasmania should implement container deposit legislation;
- (2) impediments and incentives to reduce the generation of waste and in dealing with residues;
- (3) present methods of waste management in Tasmania including regional waste management strategies;
- (4) projected methods of waste management in Tasmania compared with world's best practice;
- (5) the development of a future waste management strategy;
- (6) measures to educate and involve the community and Local Government in future strategy development and implementation;
- (7) and any matter incidental thereto.

The membership of the Committee currently consists of four members of the Legislative Council – Mr Hall (Chairman), Mr Harriss, Mrs Rattray-Wagner and Ms Thorp; and four members of the House of Assembly – Mr Gutwein, Mr McKim, Ms O'Byrne and Mr Sturges.

The Committee has general jurisdiction over the following areas : Government Business Enterprises; regulation of business, commercial and industrial relations; economic and finance development; environment and land use planning; natural resources – forestry, mining and fisheries; energy; tourism; transport; and primary industry.

This is the final report in relation to Waste Management in Tasmania and will address all the terms of reference relating to domestic, industrial and hazardous waste.

1.2 PROCEEDINGS

Advertisements were placed in the three regional daily newspapers calling for submissions and evidence regarding the Committee's full terms of reference on waste management.

Thirteen witnesses gave verbal evidence to the Committee in Hobart and are

listed in Appendix 1. Twenty-two written submissions were received and are listed in Appendix 2. Documents received into evidence are listed in Appendix 3.

The Committee commenced public hearings in Hobart on Thursday, 21 April 2005. Further hearings were held in Hobart on 21 November 2005. Site visits to several waste management centres in Tasmania were undertaken to enable Members to gain an understanding of the facilities available.

Some Members of the Committee travelled interstate to Sydney, Adelaide and Perth during the June 2005 committee week. Meetings were held in these states with senior waste management officers in relation to their overall waste management strategy, including container deposit legislation. Members also took the opportunity to visit sites involving domestic, commercial and hazardous waste disposal, including recycling activities.

Some Members of the Committee also travelled interstate in September 2005 to Melbourne, Brisbane and the ACT. Similarly, meetings were held with senior officers regarding each state and territory's waste management strategy and site visits were also undertaken.

1.3 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Committee acknowledges and thanks all those who contributed to this report and particularly those officers interstate who gave such valuable information to the Committee and co-operated with its task.

The contribution made by former Members of the Committee - Doug Parkinson MLC (former Chairman), Sue Smith MLC, David Bartlett MHA and Jeremy Rockliff MHA, is also acknowledged.

The Committee gives special thanks to the Clerk of Committees, Mrs Sue McLeod and her Executive Assistant, Miss Julie Thompson, whose dedication and ability to assist the Committee in organising its tasks were invaluable.

Glossary of Terms

CDL	Container Deposit Legislation
EPA	Environment Protection Agency
EPR	Extended Producer Responsibility
PCA	Packaging Council of Australia
BIEC	Beverage Industry Environment Council
EPHC	Environment Protection and Heritage Council
EMPCA	<i>Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994</i>
MRF	Materials Recovery Facility

Executive Summary

During recent decades, rates of consumption and consumerism have been steadily rising. While sustained economic growth has led to unprecedented prosperity for many, the associated growth in consumption is having a significant environmental impact. Waste management is a major issue Australia wide and it is clear that it remains so in Tasmania, despite increased participation rates in kerbside recycling and increasing public awareness of waste management issues.

In relation to the current system of waste management in Tasmania, there are a number of points made by the Committee. The relationship between State Government and local councils is currently well defined, though Government policy is generally focused on national schemes. Nevertheless, there are some issues with the current operation of the regional waste management system and overall there are a number of actions to be taken to ensure that Tasmania's waste management system is effective.

An audit of Tasmania's existing landfill and transfer station infrastructure and their operation is required to ensure that they are sufficient for both current and expected demand. It is clear that the disposal of hazardous waste creates many challenges and in some instances appropriate standards are not being achieved, and this needs to be addressed.

Although waste management is both an environmental and an economic issue for government, it is primarily an economic issue for businesses and other significant generators of waste, and any discussion of waste management needs to recognise this fact. Furthermore, given that very few of the goods consumed in Tasmania are in fact manufactured in the state, the potential for State regulation at the producer end of the chain is minimal. Waste management in Tasmania must therefore focus primarily on later stages, starting with reuse and recycling.

Container deposit legislation is often suggested as a way to increase rates of recycling and decrease littering. While these outcomes are desirable, the Committee is concerned about the impact the introduction of CDL would have on kerbside recycling. This is currently unknown and should be quantified before such a system could be implemented. The introduction of some form of extended producer responsibility, to cover a broader percentage of the litter stream, should also be investigated but any such system would be restricted by the size of Tasmania's manufacturing industry.

There are a number of impediments, particularly economic ones, to the effective management of waste in Tasmania. A state waste levy would be a significant step towards the resolution of this problem, as it would reduce the desirability of landfill as a waste disposal method and thus increase the incentive to find alternatives. Funding is also a major issue for Tasmanian waste management and the introduction of a waste levy could assist in

funding the functions of an Environment Protection Agency (EPA) and other waste management projects.

Such a levy could also be used to fund education measures, starting in early schooling and extending to all levels of education, with the aim of increasing awareness of waste management issues as well as increasing rates of resource recovery and recycling. Children can change the prevailing attitudes in their homes and thus early education has a flow-on effect. Cultural attitudes are crucial and education, particularly if it begins early, will assist the move towards better waste management. Cultural attitudes can be seen to be changing in relation to the issue of plastic bag usage, which has had prominence in the community over recent years. The Committee suggests that plastic shopping bags should be levied rather than banned as a way of reducing their usage.

The Committee believes that a whole-of-government approach should be taken to minimise waste generation and the impacts of government waste. All levels of government should lead by example by developing programs for reuse and recycling of materials that could then be transplanted into other areas.

Awareness of waste management issues is increasing. However, there is still a way to go, with Tasmanian waste diversion rates at half the national average and Government has a significant role to play in encouraging the adoption of waste minimisation and recycling techniques across the board. Numerous steps can be taken to improve Tasmania's waste management practices which, while not having an immediate significant effect on citizens' everyday lives, will greatly reduce the environmental impacts of increased consumption and waste requiring disposal.

18 October 2006

**Greg Hall MLC
Chairman**

Recommendations

The Committee recommends :

1. That the State Government introduce a container deposit system in Tasmania, subject to its viability and effectiveness being supported by a cost benefit analysis.
2. The implementation of a State waste levy. Administrative issues will need to be addressed with the Premier's Local Government Council.
3. That the Tasmanian Government introduce a levy on plastic HDPE shopping bags.
4. The State Government initiate a whole-of-government environmental audit, including an analysis of government procurement policies, to make recommendations to minimise waste generation, maximise the use of recycled products (i.e. paper), and minimise the environmental, social and economic impacts of disposal of government waste.
5. The Tasmanian Government investigate Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) models with a view to understanding the impact of a national EPR system on Tasmania.
6. The Tasmanian Government audit existing landfill sites and transfer stations with a view to ensuring that infrastructure and practices are upgraded where necessary, particularly in areas such as OH&S, security and ensuring that prohibited and hazardous wastes and recyclables are not disposed of in Tasmania's landfill sites.
7. That a strategy, including a public education program be developed to maximise the deferral of reusables and recyclables from the waste stream and to improve the quality of recovered and recycled waste.

Background

In the 1970s when non-refillable containers were introduced by the beverage industry, they became a visible part of the litter scene and were seen as a threat to the environment. In 1975 the South Australian Government introduced the *Beverage Container Act* to deal with this threat of litter from containers.

The South Australian Government extended the container deposit legislation in 2003 to include a wider range of beverage types and containers, including flavoured milk and fruit juice in containers of less than one litre and all non-carbonated soft drinks in containers of three litres or less. Some existing exemptions were also repealed.¹

“Container deposit legislation (CDL) operates by having a small deposit on drink containers, such as cans and bottles. When a person takes cans or bottles to a depot they can redeem the deposit. The deposit is funded by the drink manufacturers and is incorporated into the cost of the beverage shelf price. The concept is that people will be more likely to bring drink containers to depots for recycling as they are worth money”.²

Proponents of CDL believe that a refundable deposit on beverage containers will increase recycling rates and reduce the numbers that are littered, as people will be more inclined to pick them up.

“It is also argued that beverage containers collected through kerbside recycling will be more valuable, therefore off-setting some of the cost to local governments of providing kerbside recycling collection”.³

Those against CDL argue that it will become “... another layer of legislation that will hinder industry and burden taxpayers in administration costs. It is also argued that these costs will not be offset by environmental benefits (such as increased recycling rates, reduced waste to landfill and a reduction in litter) as beverage containers only make up a very small percentage of the waste and litter streams”.⁴

INTERSTATE EVIDENCE

Some Members of the Committee travelled to New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia, Victoria, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory and met with senior officers in relation to container deposit legislation

¹ Environment Protection Authority – Community awareness and acceptance of Container Deposit Legislation.

² Waste Wise WA 68

³ Waste Wise WA 69

⁴ Waste Wise WA 70

and waste management generally. Members also visited many waste management sites, including recycling centres interstate and collection depots in South Australia.

The views obtained during these visits, as well as information sourced from relevant studies, are outlined below.

South Australia

Members met with Vaughan Levitzke, Steve Smith and Andrea Woods in relation to container deposit legislation and the waste strategy in South Australia.

South Australia is the "... only State in Australia to enact [CDL] and there is a pretty strong lobby group throughout Australia to prevent the introduction of anything similar ... and the lobby groups, unfairly perhaps, continue to make inaccurate and misleading statements ...

One of the biggest claims of course is that kerbside recycling achieves the same results, but I don't think you will see those results when you go interstate and when you travel on the highways, because there is no kerbside recycling on the highways, beaches, conservation parks or whatever".⁵

Amendments to the relevant legislation are currently being considered, particularly in relation to interstate containers. "We are looking at some dispute provisions because of the commercial arrangements between the depots and the super collectors, which requires them to sort by brand. ...I think what we have in principle is a very good scheme and it is well accepted by the community, but there could be some improvements in terms of the infrastructure and the arrangements between the stakeholders. We are looking at making more transparency in some administrative procedures".⁶

In 2003 the South Australian Parliament's Environment, Resources and Development Committee reported on waste management and made the following conclusions in relation to CDL :

"Container deposit legislation is strongly supported by the South Australian community and a part of the local culture. Arguments were raised both for and against increasing the refund. A review into the economic and environmental implications of raising the deposit value should be conducted.

There were some issues raised around managing CDL, including the anomaly relating to the different capacity containers covered by the legislation – that is, most containers are up to and including 3 litres while others are less than 1 litre. This is confusing for the public and the collection depot operators as the packaging material is the same.

⁵ Smith, Mr Steve, EPA Senior Adviser, Container Deposit Legislation, Environment Protection Agency, South Australia, Transcript of Meeting, 29 June 2005, p. 15.

⁶ Ibid., p. 18.

Further the Committee found that there is a potential for abuse of the scheme from containers that have not incurred the deposit – most containers are labelled nationally by the beverage industry to minimise costs”.⁷

The Committee recommended that :

- The Prime Minister, through COAG, encourage all states and territories to adopt uniform national container deposit legislation.
- All CDL containers be a uniform capacity of up to and including 3 litres.
- The 5 cent deposit value be reviewed and that an analysis of the benefits of an increase be determined, considering both economic and environmental factors.
- The government introduce legislation to minimise the potential abuse of CDL.
- The EPA collect data to make the container deposit scheme more transparent and determine the amount of unredeemed deposits.
- Government investigate the value of redeemed deposits so that unredeemed deposits can be returned to the system for litter education initiatives.⁸

Despite the local support for container deposit legislation, the Packaging Council of Australia argues that, “It has been demonstrated in South Australia that mandatory deposits lead to a loss of skilled full-time employment. Part-time unskilled job creation occurs but this should be of no satisfaction”.⁹

New South Wales

Some Members of the Committee met with Tim Rogers, Roz Hall, Ann Trofa and Fiona Robertson in relation to waste avoidance and the resource recovery strategy in New South Wales. Legislation in this state provides a head of power to enable extended producer responsibility to be mandated if a sector is not delivering.

In relation to CDL, New South Wales is working to get a national solution and is looking at “...what is happening around the world and whether it can be transferred across to an Australian condition or not. One of the things that is problematic, and it is one of the things that fell out with the CDL work that we had done here, was that there are a number of factors which can potentially impact on a State’s ability to act unilaterally, and they are things like the Constitution”.¹⁰

An Independent Review of Container Deposit Legislation in New South Wales conducted by Dr Stuart White of the Institute of Sustainable Futures at the University of Technology found that “Container deposit legislation is an example of an increasingly important environmental management principle,

⁷ South Australia ERD Committee Report on Waste Management

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Packaging Council of Australia Inc – Issues Paper, p. 3.

¹⁰ Hall, Roz, Department of Environment and Conservation, New South Wales, Transcript of Evidence, 27/6/05, p. 20.

known as extended producer responsibility (EPR)".¹¹

The CDL Review recommended that "the NSW Government seek agreement at a national level for the adoption of EPR. This would allow a more effective model of EPR to be developed for NSW by addressing constitutional and cross-border issues".¹²

The Review also "found that stakeholder attitudes to CDL are highly heterogeneous, with strong support from local government and environment groups, majority support from the community, limited support from the recycling industry and opposition from the beverage, packaging and retail industries.

The potential benefits of introducing CDL in NSW were found to significantly exceed the costs.

In summary, the estimated value of the environmental cost of disposing of a single average beverage container to landfill, compared to recycling that container, is 8-9 cents. The cost of recovering that container through a combined CDL and kerbside recycling strategy is approximately 2-3 cents.

The CDL review concluded that NSW would obtain overall benefits from the significant improvement in the container material recycling rate and the reduction in litter that could be expected to result from the introduction of a best practice form of CDL. The Review considers that the desired outcomes of high recycling rates and reduced litter are also achievable through other regulatory mechanisms such as mandatory recovery and recycling targets. However, it notes that international experience has found deposit-refund systems to be the most effective mechanism for achieving high container recovery rates".¹³

The Packaging Council of Australia again put a case against container deposit legislation, stating that :

- "The argument for mandatory deposits (or more generally container deposit legislation) continues to be put forward as the panacea to 'solve the environmental ills created by packaging'. Such a system, applied to beverage containers, means the consumer pays a deposit on top of the purchase price which is refunded on return of the container to a specific location.
- Mandatory deposits are cited as the means to reduce litter; to encourage recycling; or through the use of refillable containers, to conserve energy and raw materials usage and reduce waste going to landfill.
- The rationale that consumers will return their containers rather than forfeit their deposits and thus bring about these outcomes has

¹¹ White, Dr Stuart, *Independent Review of Container Deposit Legislation in New South Wales* (University of Technology, Sydney)

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

superficial validity. The outcomes are seen as desirable and therefore the position has popular appeal.

- The detailed evidence from those areas where mandatory deposits are in force show that the arguments are fallacious and little, if any, environment benefit has been gained.
- In addition, evidence and a number of well researched government and privately commissioned inquiries have shown that the economic impact of deposit legislation far outweighs any gains, and that mandatory deposits would not resolve the environment issues".¹⁴

A report by the Centre for Environmental Solutions on the Impacts of Container Deposit Legislation on New South Wales Recycling and Litter Management Programs also points out a negative view :

- "In metropolitan Sydney, Council and Waste Service NSW facilities would have to be modified to redeem containers, creating a parallel, less efficient system than the existing kerbside collection and processing of recyclables.
- Rural NSW recycling programs would require significant grants, handling fees, or increased Council rates in order to redeem CDL containers.
- Increased recovery through collection depots may come at the expense of kerbside recycling programs through lost material sales revenue, lower yields per household, and lost economies of scale. Kerbside recycling contractors could benefit from redeeming deposits and receiving handling fees on the containers that remain in kerbside collections, and could theoretically pass these benefits on to Councils. However, costs to provide kerbside collections would remain fixed despite recovering a smaller volume of recyclables. Program costs may rise, which would ultimately cause Council rates to rise.
- By itself, CDL is unlikely to improve non-residential recycling programs, which represent half of container usage (such as commercial, public place and special event recycling, as well as litter prevention).
- CDL is unlikely to impact on non-beverage container litter, which represents over 90% of the litter stream. It is also doubtful whether CDL would affect littering behaviour in a beneficial way".¹⁵

Western Australia

Some Members of the Committee met with Michael Kerr, Manager of the Waste Management Board, Carolyn Jackobsen, Adrian Price, Cameron Schuster and Sue Graham-Taylor, Members of the Board as well as Phillip Hine, Manager, Environment Regulation Branch and John Ottaway, Principal Consultant, Department of Environment.

¹⁴ Packaging Council of Australia Inc – *Issues Paper*

¹⁵ Centre for Environmental Solutions – Impacts of Container Deposit Legislation on New South Wales Recycling and Litter Management Programs – December 2000

The Members were briefed in relation to the overall waste strategy for Western Australia and included discussions regarding the state's policy on container deposit legislation.

In 2003 a study was undertaken into the introduction of container deposit legislation in Western Australia. The study recommended that CDL not be introduced in that state, the main reason being the cost of infrastructure. However, "more recently it has come to the fore again, probably through the lack of progress through the National Packaging Covenant and looking at alternatives to the approaches that have been attempted, relatively unsuccessfully if not largely unsuccessfully, through the original National Packaging Covenant.

There has certainly been a lot of discussion around, why don't we just find an alternative here like CDL that we can put in place and deal with it – at least one significant form of packaging waste.

Unfortunately, with the way the covenant is set up at the moment, in effect if you are a signatory to that covenant then you can't just go and introduce CDL in your state".¹⁶

A Member of the Waste Management Board believed that there was no reason why CDL and EPR could not work together. "The cost has been put on the packaging and people can see that they can get money back for that, but because it is being also paid by the producer, the producer starts to see that as economic incentive for getting rid of that packaging. You have to have it on more than just glass or else everything would be in plastic, which of course is what happened and is continuing to happen. So you need to have perhaps a variable in terms of the price of the deposit. There would have to be some consideration of whether it was State-funded or whether it became an incentive to EPR by saying the State will pay for some of this container deposit".¹⁷

In November 2005 the Western Australian Environment Minister announced an investigation of different modes for container deposit schemes that may be used in Western Australia.

"Dr Edwards said the container deposits would strengthen initiatives such as the National Packaging Covenant that was an Australia-wide move to reduce waste".¹⁸

The latest information from the Western Australian Department of Conservation and Environment is that a stakeholder advisory group has been established to advise the Minister on the types of best practice container deposit systems applicable to Western Australia and the group is expected to

¹⁶ Kerr, Michael, Manager, Waste Management Board, Transcript of Meeting, 30 June 2005, p. 12.

¹⁷ Jakobsen, Carolyn, Member, Waste Management Board, Transcript of Meeting, 30 June 2005, p. 13.

¹⁸ Minister for the Environment, Media Statement, 27 November 2005.

report to the Minister in February 2007.

It is believed that the most appropriate powers to allow for the implementation of a container deposit system (CDS), if the Minister directs, are set out in the Draft Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery (WARR) Bill 2006 which has recently been released for 14 weeks public review.¹⁹

Independent legal advice is also being sought to ensure that the provisions of the Draft Bill are sufficient to implement a CDS for Western Australia or whether amendments or stand-alone legislation is required.

Australian Capital Territory

The Beverage Industry Environment Council is critical of CDL for all Australian states, and points out that “the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show that 97 percent of Australian households now play an active role in recycling, via their kerbside recycling service.

... The Victorian, West Australian and ACT Governments have recently published studies that – for a variety of reasons, including financial damage to established kerbside-recycling systems – found CDL would be an expensive, environmentally undesirable and inefficient addition to the existing Australian waste management infrastructure.

A number of earlier Australian Government inquiries – including two by the Industry Commission – found that the costs of CDL to consumers, governments and industry outweigh any environmental benefits.

The beverage industry believes that a partnership of producer responsibility, consumer knowledge, effective kerbside recycling systems, improved public place recycling and effective sanctions against those who deliberately litter will deliver better environmental and community outcomes than CDL.

- CDL would financially damage the kerbside recycling systems used by 97 percent of all Australians – because these two waste management approaches are incompatible.
- It would cost \$123 million to establish the basic infrastructure for CDL to operate in NSW alone.
- The cheapest form of CDL costs 2.5 times more per household than the cost of providing a kerbside recycling service.
- In the past two years the Victorian, West Australian and ACT Governments have published studies that found CDL would be an expensive, environmentally undesirable and inefficient addition to Australian waste management systems.
- The ACT Government report found that the ACT’s kerbside-recycling-based system is already recovering a higher percentage of beverage containers than any of the American CDL states, including California.

¹⁹ Ottaway, Dr John, Principal Consultant, Western Australia Department of Conservation and Environment, email dated 25 August 2006.

- South Australia, the only Australian state with CDL, lags behind virtually all States and Territories in its rate of diverting reusable materials away from landfill towards reuse.
- CDL only addresses beverage containers that comprise 10 percent of the litter stream.
- Consumers would pay higher prices for beer, soft drinks and wine if CDL was introduced".²⁰

The Beverage Industry Council further states that, "Current ACT efforts, guided by the NoWaste 2010 strategy, are more comprehensive and cost-effective than CDL and considerably easier to educate residents about than a combined kerbside and CDL program".²¹

According to the Packaging Council of Australia, "CDL has been described as the lazy policy option and the policy option for the 1970s. Echoing these sentiments, the PCA believes that CDL has severe limitations as an effective waste management tool. CDL –

- Applies to only a very small proportion of the waste stream (Beverages) where it is in operation.
- Will impose infrastructure costs disproportionate to the size of the problem being addressed.
- Targets the beverage sector which has been at the forefront of support for waste minimisation and recycling in NSW and throughout Australia.
- Focuses on recovery and has a minor impact on environmental sustainability and waste management minimisation.
- Does not directly address life cycle management of packaging.
- Will seriously undermine the National Packaging Covenant and disrupt the move towards a harmonious national approach.

The limited benefit of CDL is reflected in the fact that it has been adopted by very few governments around the world as a waste management option. Twenty-eight years after it was first introduced in the State of Oregon, CDL has not been adopted by any country on a national basis. It is only in force in ten States in the US, some States in Canada, and in South Australia. In all these cases CDL applies only to beverage containers and, in all cases, to a less than complete range of beverages".²²

Mr Chris Horsey, Manager of ACT NoWaste, believes that there are some merits to CDL, but he would not recommend it for the ACT. "Our fear is that we have a successful kerbside recycling system, which is convenient and has 95 per cent participation rate, with 78 per cent extraction. If we do this, what happens? We jeopardise our system. We don't think that is the best way to go".²³

²⁰ Beverage Industry Environment Council – ACT Study

²¹ Ibid.

²² Packaging Council of Australia – "Container Deposit Legislation – the lazy option or policy for the 1970s"

²³ Horsey, Mr Chris, Manager, ACT NoWaste, Transcript of Meeting, 28 September 2005, p. 15.

Queensland

Some Committee Members met with officers from the Department of Environment in Brisbane. Mr Tim Powe, Manager, Policy Division, believes that “CDL would compete head on with [the] kerbside recycling system ... It costs local governments about \$1.10 to \$1.20 each time the truck pulls up in front of your house and empties 240 litres into that truck. That includes a \$60 per tonne moving processing fee. We don’t think a householder could take 240 litres of empty beer and Coke bottles to a sorting depot somewhere in the city for that price. ...We can’t run two systems because what keeps kerbside viable is that you have aluminium in there worth \$1 500 a tonne and PET and HTP plastics worth \$400 a tonne. You would remove those from the kerbside system by bringing in the CDL and you would leave the low-value materials in there, such as newspapers which are worth \$30, \$40 or \$50 a tonne.”²⁴

Mr Powe also believed that if Queensland did want a CDL scheme, it would need to include the whole eastern seaboard, as there would be “...truckloads of empty bottles coming across the boarder”.²⁵

Victoria

Mr Scott Maloney, Manager of the Waste Management Unit of the Victorian Environmental Protection Agency believes that there are a number of pros and cons in relation to CDL.

“I think CDL obviously has a potential to increase some of the recovery rates around waste management situations, the bottles and cans et cetera around sporting grounds and public places, so it is something that will be kept on the table ... We saw it as being significantly expensive and placing our kerbside system at risk by taking some of the bottles and cans and the valuable PET out of the kerbside system. Obviously CDL doesn’t present a complete solution because it does look at a fairly narrow portion of the packaging types”.²⁶

A study undertaken by Nolan-ITU into the financial impacts of container deposit legislation was also considered by the Committee. The key findings of the study indicate that “the introduction of a parallel CDL system in conjunction with existing kerbside recycling systems would result in an increase in the retail cost of beverages from between 13.4 and 14.6 cents, which would result in an increase in average annual household expenditure of between \$181 and \$219. This would be offset by a decrease in the cost of kerbside services of between \$32 and \$37 per household per year.

...The net financial effect to households, as ratepayers and beverage consumers, is an increase in the average cost per household per year of between \$111 and \$157.

²⁴ Powe, Mr Tim, Manager, Policy Division, Queensland Department of Environment, Transcript of Meeting, 27 September 2005, p. 22.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 23.

²⁶ Maloney, Mr Scott, Manager, Waste Management Unit, EPA Victoria, Transcript of Meeting, 26 September 2005, p. 36.

While there would only be a minor reduction in the actual cost of providing kerbside collection services, the CDL deposits recovered by the sorter will increase their revenue significantly. This will result in a significant reduction in the net cost to the local governments of providing kerbside services, as sorters will be willing to provide their services at lower cost. This cost reduction for the individual councils studied would range between \$0.25 million and \$0.64 million if they are able to receive 10% of the available CDL deposits".²⁷

TASMANIAN EVIDENCE

The Committee heard arguments, both for and against, whether it would be possible for Tasmania to implement its own container deposit legislation.

Evidence received from Mr Russ Martin, representing the Beverage Industry Environment Council (BIEC), indicated that "...implementing CDL in Tasmania would have to be part of a national CDL scheme due to the Commonwealth's *Mutual Recognition Act 1992* and due to constitutional matters that would likely classify CDL as an excise"²⁸.

Representatives from the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment advised that specific legal advice in this regard had not been sought from the Solicitor-General, but it was now believed that "... it is possible, as long as you are clever enough in the way you went about it. There would certainly be some significant hurdles to overcome in doing that".²⁹

The Committee sought an opinion from the Solicitor-General and the advice received concluded that "...it ought to be possible to craft legislation which operated effectively in this State to make enforceable provision for the charging and collection of refundable container deposits without infringing the requirements of the *Mutual Recognition Act 1992 (Commonwealth)*".³⁰

The Tasmanian Government's current waste strategy is focussing on the national packaging covenant. "The national packaging covenant is attempting to address packaging waste on a wide range and looking at a cradle-to-grave approach. CDL ... has a very narrow focus, not only on beverage containers, but also on collecting the stuff at the end rather than design of products and so on. At the moment we are supportive of the more holistic approach that the national packaging covenant is taking, but ... with the qualification that it has to deliver".³¹

In the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment written

²⁷ EPA Victoria, Container Deposit Legislation – Financial Impacts, January 2003, pp. 1-2.

²⁸ Martin, Mr Russ, Environmental Consultant, Beverage Industry Environment Council, Transcript of Evidence, 21 April 2005, p. 70.

²⁹ Jones, Mr Warren, General Manager – Environment, Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, Transcript of Evidence, 21 April 2005, p. 80.

³⁰ Bale, Mr WCR, QC, Solicitor-General, Letter to Chairman, dated 29 April 2005, p.2.

³¹ Jones, p. 82.

submission, the viability of kerbside systems was questioned if CDL was introduced.

“The removal of high value material from kerbside systems in favour of container collection depots may reduce the viability of Council kerbside systems. Profit margins for the remaining materials may be reduced, and a likely outcome is that local government will need to increasingly subsidise collections to offset this effect. It should also be recognised that, although South Australia has a CDL system to help reduce litter, it also has the lowest recycling rates in Australia for some commodities e.g. newsprint. In some instances the lower value materials that are collected are landfilled, thus causing a further waste problem.

Although CDL schemes may encourage people to return containers, they do not address reuse or reprocessing options. ...A container deposit system is of little value for waste management unless accompanied by market development to increase the demand for recycled materials, otherwise the returned materials may be landfilled. ...A CDL system does not address the broader management of other waste packaging materials, such as paper and cardboard. The introduction of CDL may also be arguably unfair, as well as anti-competitive, as it legislatively targets a very small proportion of the overall waste packaging stream”.³²

Mr Martin, on behalf of BIEC, acknowledged that “...CDL does generally increase beverage container recovery and that CDL does reduce beverage container litter which generally accounts for 8 to 10 per cent of the litter stream”.³³ However, he also argued that the “impacts are highly dependent on the deposit providing enough incentive to warrant the extra effort. To keep up with inflation, deposits would have to be in the order of 20 to 30 cents per container in order to provide much motivation to consumers. ...As evidenced by the general decrease in CDL beverage recovery rates over time, the deposits also lose their value over time, and programs rarely increase the deposits once they have been implemented. It also becomes harder and harder to educate and motivate consumers, given that there is strong competition for consumer attention”.³⁴

According to the Beverage Industry Environment Council, “If you introduce CDL on top of comprehensive recycling you create a duplicate system that would undercut recycling programs and increase the cost of kerbside recycling if ... consumers are motivated by the deposit. That is because CDL would then remove the high-value materials out of recycling programs. Costs would not go down, even though less material would be recovered, and in fact council rates may actually have to increase. Officials of Germany’s dual system report that the introduction of mandatory CDL on top of their comprehensive recycling program resulted in a cost of over \$300 million euros or about half a billion dollars Australian in 2003. Recent studies have also

³² Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, Submission dated November 2004, p. 4.

³³ Martin, Mr Russ, Transcript of Evidence, 21 April 2005, p. 71.

³⁴ Ibid.

found that implementing CDL in Germany actually resulted in a negative effect on the environment and a net loss of 9 500 jobs in 2004".³⁵

The Southern Waste Strategy Authority did not favour CDL and supported BIEC's argument that "...kerbside recycling is at least as effective and it acts on a broader range of materials. You wouldn't do both, so I think it is one or the other but not both. The only people I know of who have done both have done CDL first and found they have had to introduce kerbside to get a greater range of materials recovery".³⁶

Additional information provided to the Committee by the Southern Waste Strategy Authority indicated that "... if 80% of food and drink containers were diverted to CDL, the value of kerbside materials would reduce by \$11/household/year. This represents a 43% increase in the cost of kerbside services to local government".³⁷

Mr David West, representing Boomerang Alliance, stated that "one of the reasons CDL is criticised by industry is that in a number of nations in northern Europe they have chosen to set the deposit so high because they want to cap consumption. ...I am not going to recommend that Tasmania does that but I think it is very important to recognise that the cost and the impact on kerbside is purely based on where you decide to set a deposit and a handling fee based on the environmental outcomes that you are looking for".³⁸

"At least 10 nations or states introduced CDL on top of an existing kerbside system".³⁹

"...The most remarkable thing about the Californian system is that they use part of their unredeemed deposits to underpin markets for quality goods. At the moment what they are underpinning is glass recovery. They actually provide a rebate for clean glass. What that has resulted in is that California absolutely dominates business opportunities in the production of glass and bottles, in development of new small-line aluminium things such as aluminium bats and aluminium can openers and those sort of things. They have done that through their EPR system. They can guarantee the feed stock of a clean, reliable, consistent source of materials and they now absolutely dominate the production markets in areas of plastics, glass and aluminium, even though they don't have the raw materials extraction that the rest of the country does. I believe that is an enormous opportunity for Tasmania".⁴⁰

Mr West believes that CDL should be regarded as part of EPR as "...some of the best systems work in parallel. Japan has been doing great guns in the last five to ten years. It introduced a packaging audit built an aspect of

³⁵ Martin, p. 72.

³⁶ Griffiths, Mike, Chief Executive Officer, Southern Waste Strategy Authority, Transcript of Evidence, 21 April 2005, p. 96.

³⁷ Southern Waste Strategy Authority, National Waste Management Policy, Discussion Draft, April 2006, p. 4.

³⁸ West, Mr David, Boomerang Alliance, Transcript of Evidence, 21 April 2005, pp. 27-28.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 28.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 34.

container deposits off that and is now the first nation that is tackling in real, meaningful ways things like end-of-life vehicles and computers, without a murmur of industry opposition”.⁴¹

In support of CDL, Dr Simon Parsons argued that “... the number of containers being returned [in South Australia] is actually up from 30 to 80 percent based on that levy and we all know that the main lobby group that opposes this levy is funded by the beverage industry... All forms of packaging could have some sort of levy attached to them – cigarette butts, potato chips, particularly fast food packaging”.⁴²

Mrs Jo Carswell, on behalf of Clean Up Australia Day, believed that “... container deposit legislation for this State is long overdue and would go some way in addressing the issue of litter and bringing a certain amount of litter into the waste stream – in other words, a resource recovery”.⁴³

“I feel it will stop the amount of rubbish that is discarded presently when it is obviously financial issues that preoccupy most individuals’ decision making ; for example, ‘should I throw out this bottle or shouldn’t I?’ I have publicly said before I would like to see a dollar as the deposit legislation on beverage containers. It sounds very radical but if you really go out there and look at all the roads, you could be assured that if someone had a decision to make about either throwing a bottle out of the window that was worth a dollar or returning it to recover the dollar, they would return it”.⁴⁴

Also in support of EPR and CDL, Ms Mackeen, General Manager of Athena Waste Management stated “... we are trying to get away from that idea of chuck it in the garbage bag, throw it out the front door and forget about it – it’s somebody else’s responsibility. We need to bring it back to the individual all the time. Saying that, we need to bring it back to our industry as well – extended producer responsibility. If I am going to produce something that is wrapped in glassy paper, plastic and foam then my company should be taking responsibility for that. Fisher and Paykel are a good example in New Zealand. They now retrieve or accept back all their freezers, fridges and washing machines that they have produced – good, bad or otherwise – for reuse businesses”.⁴⁵

In more recent correspondence received from the General Manager of the Environment Division of the Department of Tourism, Arts and the Environment, the State Government’s views in relation to container deposit legislation were clarified :

“Our previous submission raised a number of known issues about CDL systems, in particular the potential to remove the most valuable items (e.g. glass) from kerbside recycling bins and therefore harm the economic viability

⁴¹ West, p. 35.

⁴² Parsons, Dr Simon, Transcript of Evidence, 21 April 2005, p. 6.

⁴³ Carswell, Mrs Jo, Transcript of Evidence, 21 April 2005, p. 43.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Mackeen, Debra, Athena Waste Management, Transcript of Evidence, 21 April 2005, p. 57.

of kerbside recycling as a whole. While these concerns remain, it should be noted that it may be possible to construct a CDL system which enables Councils (or their contractors) to collect unredeemed deposits and so support kerbside recycling. The actual impact of CDL on our successful kerbside recycling systems constitutes an 'unknown' and potential risk that would need careful consideration".⁴⁶

In analysing the evidence presented to the Committee, it is clear that there are conflicting views in relation to the success, or otherwise, of the implementation of Container Deposit Legislation for Tasmania.

Recommendation :

The Committee recommends that the State Government introduce a container deposit system in Tasmania, subject to its viability and effectiveness being supported by a cost benefit analysis.

⁴⁶ Jones, Mr Warren, General Manager, Environment Division, Department of Tourism, Arts and the Environment, Letter dated 23 August 2006, p. 2.

Impediments and Incentives to Reduce Waste

Chapter 2

Impediments and incentives to reduce the generation of waste and in dealing with residues.

The Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment's written submission clearly sets out the issues surrounding the generation of waste and the impediments and incentives that exist.

"There are a number of internationally recognised drivers for sustainable waste management which require consideration :

- Increasing need to "decouple" economic growth and the environmental impacts of development (i.e. consumerism and waste growth)
- More efficient use of increasing scarcity and cost of virgin resources and raw materials
- The need to ensure intergenerational equity and sustainable development
- Changing community values, expectations and attitudes about the environment
- Increasing manufacturing costs
- Costs of treatment and disposal
- Health and environmental impacts of landfills and incineration processes
- Requirements of environmentally-sensitive markets and trading partners

All waste should be managed in accordance with the guiding principles of the waste management hierarchy, with waste avoidance being the most preferred option and disposal and permanent containment being the least preferred. The waste hierarchy states that waste should be managed in the following order of preference :

- Avoidance
- Reuse
- Recycling
- Energy recovery
- Repository storage
- Treatment
- Disposal/permanent containment"⁴⁷

Impediments

"Waste avoidance through avoidance or reduction at source is somewhat hampered by the fact that most of Tasmania's goods and products are imported which limits the Government's ability to encourage manufacturers to

⁴⁷ Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, p. 23.

employ design-for-the-environment principles in product design, reduce waste or provide end of life product take-back services. For this reason, personal purchasing and consumption habits, including the careful selection of goods are the keys to reducing domestic waste.

There is broad support and appreciation of the economic benefits of waste avoidance within the Tasmanian manufacturing industry, yet most businesses do not fully understand the nature, volume or environmental impacts of wastes that they produce, or how reducing waste can contribute significantly to reducing the overall manufacturing costs (the so-called “triple-bottom line” benefits).

...There are therefore a number of perceived “impediments” to fully embracing waste avoidance measures that would require education and training to address. These include :

- Insufficient capital to install new source reduction equipment or implement new source reduction practices;
- Lack of technical information on source reduction techniques applicable to the specific production practice;
- Source reduction not economically feasible; cost savings in waste management or production will not recover the capital investment within a preferred 3-year payback timeframe;
- Concern that product quality may decline as a result of source reduction;
- Technical limitations of the manufacturing operations;
- Permitting restrictions; and
- Source reduction previously implemented – additional reduction does not appear to be feasible due to permitting requirements, or is not technically or economically feasible”.⁴⁸

There are also barriers in dealing with residues of waste. The 1999 Waste Generation and Infrastructure Needs Analysis sought the views of local government and industry regarding these barriers and the results are listed in Figures 1 and 2 below.

Figure 1 - Barriers to Waste Minimisation as viewed by Local Government
(1999 Nolan ITU & Willis Chirgwin)

Barriers to Waste Minimisation	Level of agreement		
	Southern	North Western	Northern
Low landfill pricing	25%	25%	25%
Low price of virgin resource	43%	63%	63%
Lack of Political will	33%	13%	63%
Community Culture	33%	50%	38%
Distance to markets	75%	87%	63%
Lack of incentive	42%	63%	63%

⁴⁸ Department of Primary Industries, p. 25

Council financial resources	83%	37%	50%
Market for end products	92%	87%	87%
Other	25%	0%	13%

“Reprocessed materials often directly compete on price with lower priced virgin materials. This means the recycling collection industry is a price taker, not a price maker, which often leads to the businesses involved being economically marginal, and acts as a barrier to sunrise resource recovery industries. Nonetheless with valuable support from industry, the community and a commitment by both local and State Government to decrease waste to landfill, resource recovery has great potential to create employment and contribute to sustainability principles”.⁴⁹

Mr Ron Ward, General Manager of Collex in Tasmania also argues that the volume of recyclables is essential to ensure his company’s viability. “We lack the volume to do some of the things we would ideally like to do in the State. ...because of the size of the market or the opportunity for introducing new alternative waste technology – such as MRF [Materials Recovery Facility]... there is a huge commercial risk associated with it because you have to capture so much of the available market for the economics to work”.⁵⁰

“Other barriers to recycling include :

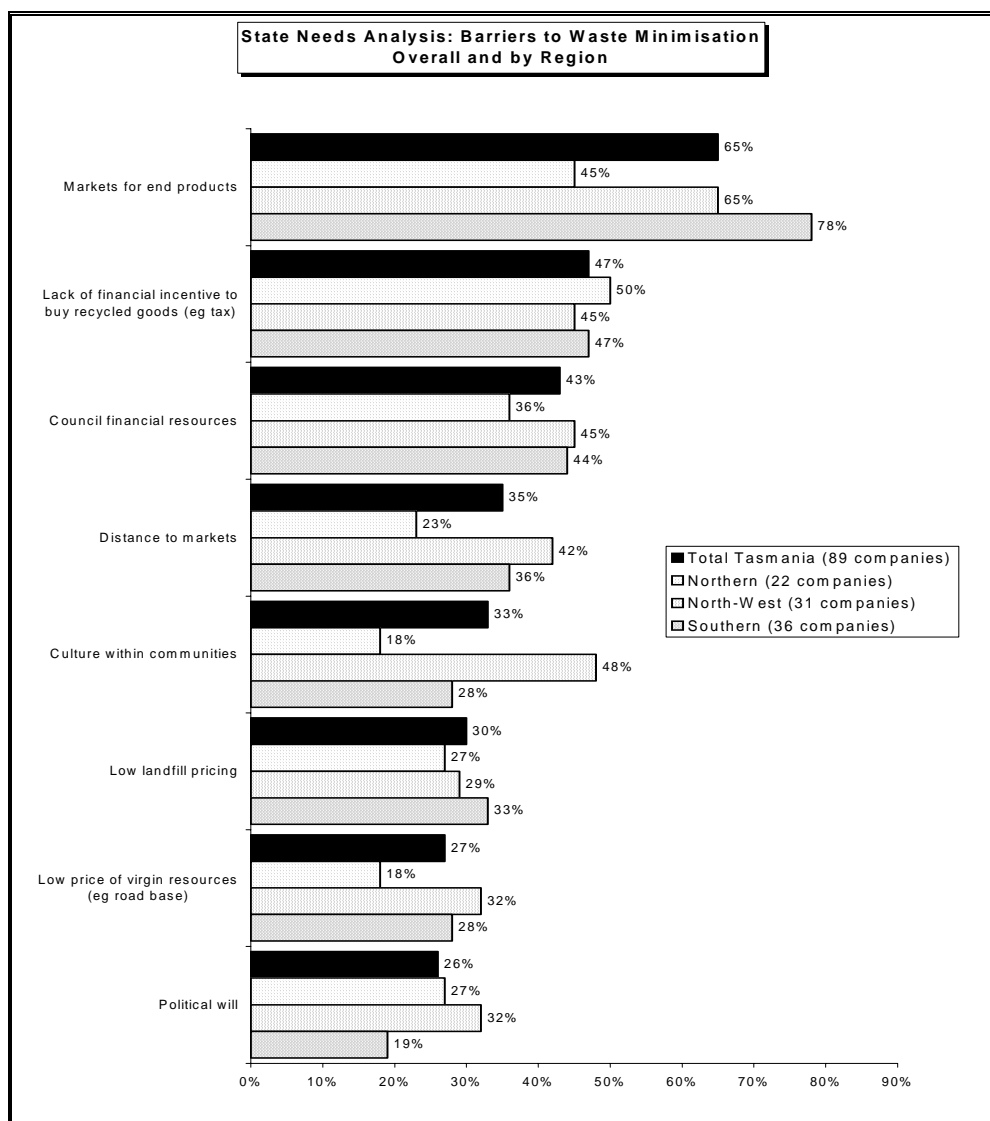
- The small economies of scale achievable in Tasmania which limits local value-adding options, or necessitates Tasmania developing its own solutions rather than “piggy backing” directly on experience elsewhere;
- Scarce financial resources to establish quality resource recovery facilities;
- The lack of regionalisation of waste management strategies hinders market development;
- Uncertainty concerning the emerging refuse disposal infrastructure, such as waste to energy facilities and the development and coordination of regional landfills leads to further uncertainty for investors in resource recovery enterprises;
- Landfill pricing in Tasmania is relatively low compared to elsewhere in Australia and this acts as a disincentive to source separation and waste minimisation, especially of building and demolition materials;
- The lack of incentives to buy recycled goods; and
- Lack of industry cohesion within individual resource recovery sectors leading to low rates of technology transfer and information sharing”.⁵¹

⁴⁹ op.cit.

⁵⁰ Ward, Mr Ron, Collex, Transcript of Evidence, 21 November 2005, p. 2.

⁵¹ Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, p. 26.

Figure 2 - Barriers to Waste Minimisation as viewed by Industry
(1999 Nolan ITU & Willis Chirgwin)



Collex believes that “residues from the commercial and industrial sectors are not necessarily valued to the extent they deserve. Landfill charges within the state have traditionally competed against more sustainable methods for waste handling and consequently diversion from landfill has not been achieved ...”⁵²

Evidence provided by the Waste Management Association of Australia (Tasmania Branch) also supports this view. Mr Reardon argues that there is no incentive for industry to divert recoverables “...such as organic, construction and demolition waste, commercial and industrial wastes. They

⁵² Collex Pty Ltd, Submission to Joint Standing Committee on Environment, Resources and Development, November 2004, p 2.

are not viable because the cost of disposal is too low. People are not prepared to divert waste if they can throw it in a bin and dispose of it for \$30".⁵³

According to the Southern Waste Strategy Authority "landfill levies are imposed in some states, but a limited amount of this revenue is returned directly to local government waste minimisation programs :

- In Victoria some 70% of the \$5 – 11/tonne levy funds a state waste minimisation body, EcoRecycle Victoria. Limited direct grants are made to local government.
- In South Australia, 50% of the \$10.50/tonne levy funds the state body, Zero Waste SA.
- In NSW, the waste levy is now over \$22/tonne, with none of these funds understood to be returned to local government for solid waste management. The funds were recently 'hijacked' for timber industry restructuring. The latest proposals involve progressively increasing the levy to \$57, with half of the increase to be provided to local government if it meets performance targets dictated by the state.
- WA's levy was recently doubled to \$6/tonne to fund the State's 'strategic waste initiatives', but it is understood that the recycling incentive payments previously made to local government have been abolished.
- Qld does not currently have a landfill levy, however rumours persist that it is being considered".⁵⁴

The Tasmanian Infection Control Association has concerns regarding the treatment of clinical and other hazardous wastes. The Association's submission states : "Presently in Tasmania, clinical and related wastes are not able to be treated by any method such as incineration, shredding or disinfection. Consequently clinical waste is not rendered safe with regard to occupational health and safety and for this reason waste is not able to be compacted to achieve significant volume reduction".⁵⁵

Any residual waste, particularly that which is hazardous to human health and the environment, requires appropriate disposal and/or robust treatment.

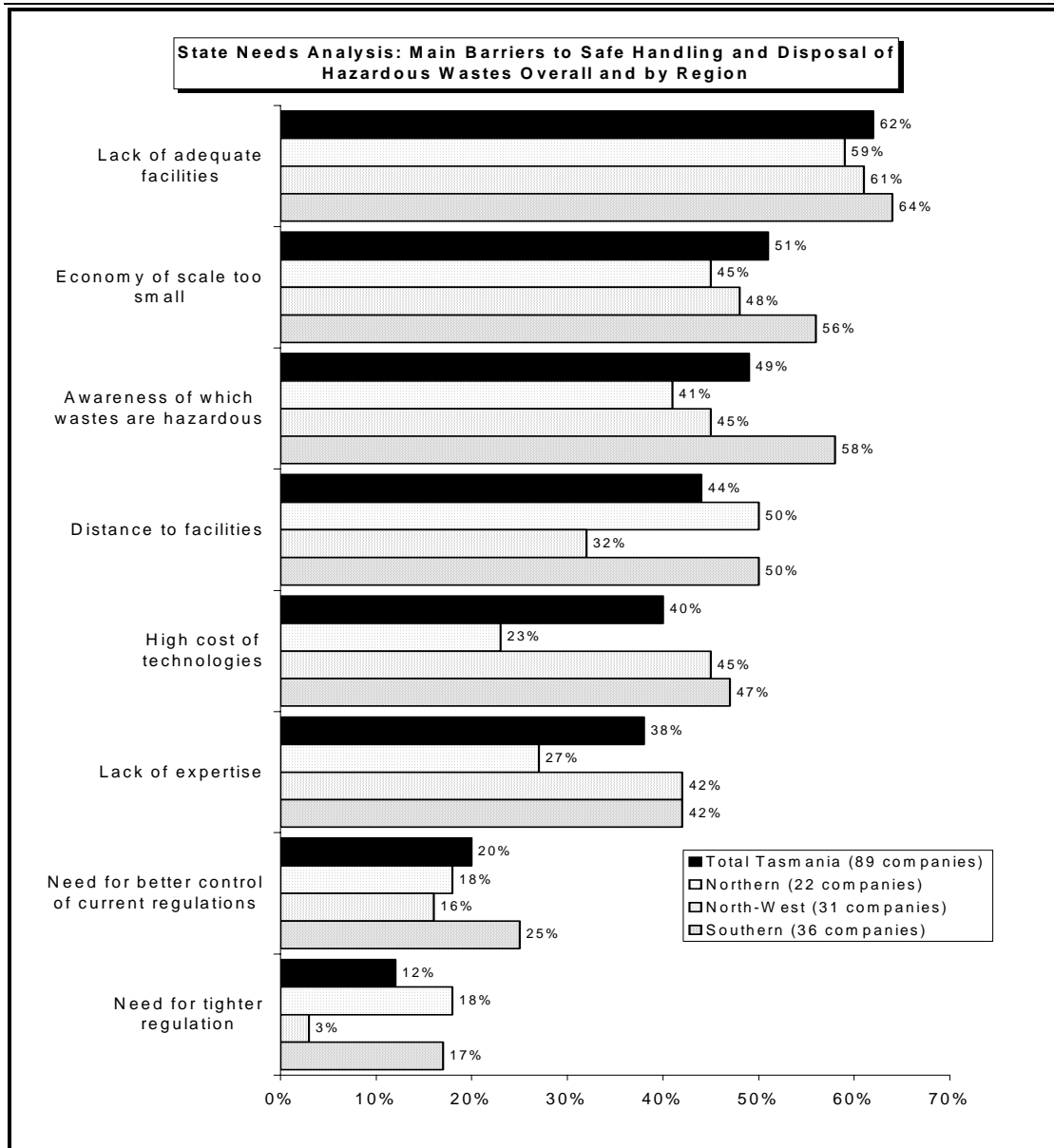
The barriers perceived by industry to improved management of residual waste were also examined in the 1999 Waste Generation and Infrastructure Needs Analysis and are shown in Figure 3.

⁵³ Reardon, Mr M., Waste Management Association of Australia (Tasmania Branch), Transcript of Evidence, 21 April 2005, p. 106.

⁵⁴ Southern Waste Strategy Authority, National Waste Management Policy, Discussion Draft, April 2006, pp. 8-9.

⁵⁵ Tasmanian Infection Control Association (TICA) Inc, Submission on Waste Management in Tasmania to the Joint Standing Committee on Environment, Resources and Development, 19 November 2004, p. 1.

Figure 3: Main Barriers to Improved Hazardous Waste Management
(1999 Nolan ITU & Willis Chirgwin)



This table shows clearly that the lack of adequate facilities, as well as the lack of community education in relation to what constitutes hazardous waste, are issues requiring action.

Incentives

“Behavioural and cultural change is usually considered the key to reducing domestic waste. One US model to avoid the generation of domestic waste is known as the “Pay-as-You-Throw” (PAYT) system. In US communities with PAYT programs (also known as per container systems, unit pricing or variable-rate pricing), residents are charged for the collection of municipal solid waste-ordinary household rubbish-based on the amount they throw

away. This creates a direct economic incentive to recycle more and to generate less waste. While such systems for municipal solid waste collection and disposal are an effective means to encourage source reduction and recycling, Pay-as-You-throw programs are not widespread.”⁵⁶

“...The development of waste avoidance and cleaner production assistance and demonstration packages to industry is one mechanism that could be explored to increase the uptake of waste reduction measures at source. Such packages could include :

- Providing assistance to businesses and industry to conduct site assessments and waste audits to identify waste management issues and opportunities for waste avoidance and resource recovery;
- Providing packaged industry assistance for research and technology transfer;
- Showcasing cleaner production case studies and demonstration projects; and
- Provide ongoing education to waste producers on their environmental obligations and the benefits of at source waste reduction”.⁵⁷

Ms Mackeen from Athena Waste Management believes that separation of waste brings immediate economic benefit to the consumer and thus provides an incentive to reduce waste to landfill. A landfill levy encourages people to think about what is reusable and recyclable in order to save money.⁵⁸

Additional information provided by the Tasmanian Department of Tourism, Arts and the Environment outlined local government views in relation to a Producer Pays Waste Disposal Fee provided through a series of forums conducted by the Premier’s Local Government Council. Some comments were “... strongly opposed to any form of ‘waste levy’. At this point in time such a proposal would not have majority support of local government, although there have been some suggestions that both the north and north-west regions might follow the south and introduce their own levy”.⁵⁹

The Committee met with officers from Zero Waste in South Australia who believe that the “key elements in [their] business plan are about assistance and incentives”⁶⁰ which are funded through a waste levy.

“...We fund regional waste management plans. We fund 50 per cent of the development of the plan with the region. If there are six councils they might put in, say \$10 000 each for a \$120 000 project. We are leading in the greening of government as well. We have a focus on changing the way the State Government performs its operations so it can lead by example. Zero Waste SA has stewardship of waste management within State government,

⁵⁶ Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, p. 28.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 29.

⁵⁸ Mackeen, p. 50.

⁵⁹ Jones, Letter dated 23 August 2006, p. 1.

⁶⁰ Levitzke, Zero Waste, Transcript of Evidence, 29 June 2005, p. 7.

so we are trying to drive change by the way we deal with waste within State government".⁶¹

A further incentive to reduce plastic waste would be to implement a levy on the use of plastic HDPE shopping bags. The Committee noted that "at the July meeting of the Environment Protection and Heritage Council the Tasmanian Government, along with other States and the Federal Government, reaffirmed a previous resolution to phase out lightweight single-use plastic bags by 1 January 2009.

A Regulatory Impact Statement covering a range of nationally consistent regulatory options to deliver phase out is being developed and will be released for public comment early next year.

The Tasmanian Government favours a nationwide levy on all plastic bags issued to consumers, as this option proved very effective in Ireland and it overcomes constitutional issues and a number of other practicalities associated with other options".⁶²

Mr Warren Jones, General Manager, Environment, Department of Primary Industries and Water also believes that a funding program for innovation in the recycling area would provide an incentive to divert waste in Tasmania.

Therefore, the Committee believes that the introduction of waste levies, as well as industry grants, are strong incentives to reduce waste. The introduction of a state waste levy should facilitate the progression towards kerbside recycling in the five municipalities not currently participating.

Waste levies are discussed further in Chapter 4 and are considered an important part of any future waste management strategy for Tasmania.

Recommendation

The Committee recommends :

- The implementation of a State waste levy. Administrative issues will need to be addressed with the Premier's Local Government Council.
- That the Tasmanian Government introduce a levy on plastic HDPE shopping bags.

⁶¹ Levitzke, p. 7.

⁶² Jones, Letter dated 23 August 2006, pp. 3-4.

Present Methods of Waste Management Chapter 3

The Tasmanian Government submission states that the “waste management policy in Tasmania is directly derived from the *Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act of 1994* (EMPCA) and regulations and policies made under it, which collectively form the Government’s legislative policy framework for waste management in Tasmania.

Objectives of the *Act* that have relevance to waste management include :

- (b) to prevent environmental degradation and adverse risks to human and ecosystem health by promoting pollution prevention, clean production technology, reuse and recycling of materials and waste minimisation programs; and
- (c) to regulate, reduce or eliminate the discharge of pollutants and hazardous substances to air, land or water consistent with maintaining environmental quality; and
- (e) to require persons engaging in polluting activities to make progressive environmental improvements, including reductions of pollution at source, as such improvements become practicable through technological and economic development; and
- (g) to control the generation, storage, collection, transportation, treatment and disposal of waste with a view to reducing, minimising and, where practicable, eliminating harm to the environment.

EMPCA places regulatory controls on the management of waste including the reception, storage, transport, treatment or disposal of waste and provides a suite of regulatory tools that can be used more widely in relation to waste management.

Specifically, EMPCA provides for the regulation of waste depots (landfills) and waste transport businesses which are classified as level 2 activities in Schedule 2 of the Act”.⁶³

The focus of waste management in Tasmania has changed over the last 20 years from “... simply providing facilities for waste disposal, to actively planning for systems and facilities to recover resources. Such initiatives include :

- Improved management and rationalisation of landfills;
- Improved infrastructure for wastewater treatment;
- The introduction of kerbside recycling collections and the high levels of community participation in recycling schemes;
- An increased focus on water recycling; and
- An increased focus on regional waste management in parts of the State”.⁶⁴

⁶³ Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, pp. 7-8.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

The Statewide Partnership Agreement on Waste ...recognised the role of the State Government in relation to waste management as follows :

- Identifying statewide waste management performance outcomes
- Developing and coordinating statewide waste management strategies and policies taking into account the national, regional and local context
- Consulting with the community, industry, local government and regional bodies
- Evaluating waste management outcomes and environmental impacts
- Governing hazardous waste management programs and services
- Providing and enforcing a legislative framework for the management of the environment and waste
- Assessing and regulating Level 2 premises under the Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994 (EMPCA)

The Partnership specified that councils, acting individually or jointly, have the following roles in waste management :

- Setting local and, where applicable, regional waste management performance outcomes
- Developing and coordinating local and, where applicable, regional waste management policies and plans taking into account the State context
- Consulting with the community, industry, and State Government
- Governing waste collection, minimisation and disposal programs and services
- Evaluating waste management performance outcomes and environmental impacts
- Assessing and regulating Level 1 premises as defined under EMPCA”.⁶⁵

The Government submission strongly supports the delivery of waste management services and infrastructure via regional arrangements. Benefits that have been identified by using this approach include :

- “Development of regional waste minimisation and disposal strategies;
- Data collection and reporting;
- Planning and identification and provision of regional and sub-regional resource recovery and treatment/disposal facilities;
- Regionally consistent approaches to recycling;
- Regional pricing structures;
- Regional contract development and service delivery; and
- Market development”.⁶⁶

Although it is stated that the “Department is supportive of waste avoidance as being the first action under the established waste management hierarchy and promotes waste avoidance through permit conditions where appropriate”⁶⁷, it

⁶⁵ Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, p.11.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.12.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 15.

appears that Government policy currently focuses on national schemes.

“State-based waste management and resource recovery is increasingly being influenced by product stewardship schemes developed at the national level, reflecting the changing structure of business, which is increasingly conducted on a national or international basis. Tasmania participates in these national programs through the waste working group of the Environment Protection and Heritage Council (EPHC). ...Participation in national committees is resource intensive, however for Tasmania, national takeback schemes for imported commodities often represents the only means of keeping waste from landfill.

...There are a number of national and interstate programs geared towards providing information, advice and case studies on reducing waste through cleaner production and eco-efficiency within specific commercial sectors. Among other things, these programs serve to highlight actual measures that businesses have implemented to minimise waste generation and maximise their economic benefits”.⁶⁸

In 1993 New Zealand Fisher and Paykel began a pilot project that operated as a take-back scheme affecting whole appliances. Fisher and Paykel now have their own recycling centre, which deals with around 25,000 appliances each year as well as packaging waste from consumers and from production factories.⁶⁹ This is a good example of a company taking extended producer responsibility.⁷⁰

This example also provides an opportunity to demonstrate how financially beneficial such schemes can be. Fisher and Paykel either reuse or resell their products' packaging when returned which is a significant saving on the cost of those items. The company also recycles waste from its own factories.

According to the Tasmanian Government submission, “there is a strong community support and recognition for sustainability and resource recovery programs such as re-use and repair centres and kerbside recycling, with Tasmanians being leading recyclers of domestic waste. Diversion from the household waste stream has increased significantly over the decade and Tasmania's household waste source separation exceeds the national average”.⁷¹ (see table below).

According to a presentation at a waste management forum in April 2005 by Carinda Rue, Department of Environment, “Tasmania has the lowest waste diversion rate in the country (18%) – half the national average of 36%”.⁷²

⁶⁸ Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, p. 16.

⁶⁹ <http://www.fisherpaykel.co.nz/about-us/the-environment/recycling.cfm>

⁷⁰ Mackeen, p. 57

⁷¹ Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, p. 17.

⁷² Rue, Carinda, WMAA AGM Forum – Pros and Cons of a Statewide Waste Levy, 29 April 2005.

Diversion Rates for Specific Commodities in Southern Tasmania⁷³

Overall Diversion Rates

MATERIAL	DIVERSION (%)
Paper/ C'Board	37
Glass	70
PET	73
HDPE	76
HDPE Col	26
PVC	27
LPB	37
Aluminium	59
Steel	56
Overall	51

The Government submission states that :

“The number of Councils undertaking kerbside recycling has increased to 24 out of the 29 council areas. Participation rates in these kerbside recycling programs have generally increased over the years, to a State average of 65% in 2004. In addition, the amount of organic waste recycled has increased in the last decade, with a number of new organic waste treatment facilities being developed ...”⁷⁴

The Australian Bureau of Statistics provides information about Tasmania’s waste management views and practices collected through a nationwide survey.⁷⁵ The survey results support the Government’s view of increased participation, suggesting an even larger rate. The survey found that about 97% of Tasmanian households engaged in recycling or re-using waste, compared to 95% nationwide. Tasmania also had the second highest level of composting/mulching.

Collex Pty Ltd argues that commercial/industrial (C/I) and commercial/demolition (C/D) wastes contribute significantly to landfill inputs when compared to domestic usage. They contend that this largely overshadows gains made by local Councils and the broader community to divert recyclables from landfill via kerbside collection.⁷⁶ This seems to indicate that even though kerbside recycling rates are increasing, the amount of C/I and C/D waste is an area that requires a greatly increased focus.

Specific information about Tasmania’s solid landfill waste quantities and waste quantities other than landfill was not available for 2002-03.⁷⁷

⁷³ Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, p. 17.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 18.

⁷⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Tasmanian Environment, Waste Recycling link available at : <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@nsf/2f762f95845417aeca25706c00834efa/0438F7A5169D9>

⁷⁶ Collex Pty Ltd, Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Environment, Resources and Development, 11 November 2005, p. 2.

⁷⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Year Book 2005.

Details of other states' solid waste disposal are shown in the table below :

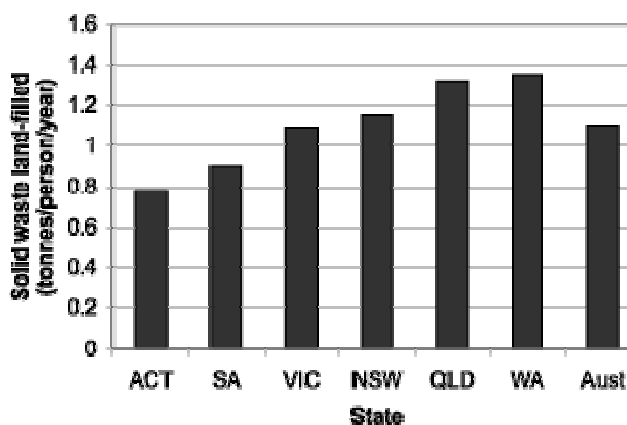


Figure 80: Solid waste disposal in Australia.
[HS Indicators 10.1 and 10.2]

Source: ABS (1998).

Residual Waste

“Even with a significant reduction of the volume of waste being produced and a greater emphasis on waste reuse and recycling, there will always be a portion of the waste stream that cannot be practicably or economically avoided or recovered. These wastes, particularly wastes that are hazardous to human health or the environment, require robust treatment and disposal systems to be in place to protect human health and the environment. A core strategy therefore must be to minimise or eliminate the risk of any significant adverse effects associated with the management of specific waste streams and the operation of waste treatment and disposal facilities. A current focus of the Government is to develop and implement better performance standards and improve environmental compliance”.⁷⁸

One issue that was identified during the survey conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics was the improper disposal of hazardous waste. Tasmania reflects the national trend, with 60% of those who disposed of hazardous waste improperly being unaware of safe disposal methods. Tasmania reported 85% of households disposing of some form of hazardous waste and only 19% of these using safe disposal facilities.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, p. 27.

⁷⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Environmental Issues : Peoples Views and Practices Cat. No. 4602.0 available at : <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/e5cb0b4547cc4ca25697500217f47/b0231f731038b3f4ca256f55007acd5d!OpenDocument>

Projected Methods of Waste Management and Future Waste Management Strategy Chapter 4

The Victorian Parliament's Inquiry into Sustainable Communities indicated that behavioural change was required in order to achieve a reduction in household waste. The following behaviours were seen as crucial in promoting sustainable consumption :

- “Purchasing products in bulk and storing food in reusable containers to reduce packaging waste;
- Avoiding highly packaged items and purchasing recycled and recyclable items;
- Reusing and repairing household items rather than disposing and avoiding disposable products;
- Reducing consumption of unnecessary consumer items;
- Sourcing good quality second hand items or items that are long lasting;
- Becoming a ‘best practice recycler’ by recycling as much as possible through kerbside recycling, becoming aware of what items can be recycled, avoiding contamination of recyclable items and purchasing recycled products;
- Home composting; and
- Reducing garden waste through the selection of plants requiring less pruning and produce less green waste, for example by avoiding deciduous plants”.⁸⁰

It is evident that Tasmania also needs to address these issues through community education and other strategies to assist in waste avoidance and reduction. It should be considered that most other state Governments have revised their waste management practices and introduced bodies to take over from local Government. The Governments in NSW, QLD, VIC, SA, and WA have all adopted separate statewide waste management authorities.⁸¹ These bodies provide policy and framework for waste management and have been reported as highly successful.

Several issues have been identified with the current Tasmanian approach towards waste management. These include the fact that the regional strategy is slow and cumbersome, and that practices are not uniform across the state. Mr. Warren Jones, General Manager of Environment, Department of Primary Industries and Water supports the regional management of waste, but acknowledges that there are problems with the current approach :

“The long and the short of it was that we got to the point where we agreed that the regions would be given a chance to develop regional strategies and we

⁸⁰ Parliament of Victoria, Report of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee on the Inquiry into Sustainable Communities, No. 140 Session 2003-05.

⁸¹ Joint Standing Committee on Environment, Resources and Development – Waste Management, Interstate Documents.

would then draw those together. We have not reached that point in terms of the regions or getting to the point where they have been able to use them. As you rightly point out and as our submission says, it has been slow and variable.”⁸²

The idea of a standard approach around the State makes sense in terms of Tasmania’s relatively small size. The Waste Management Association of Australia examined reports from the Tasmanian Waste Advisory Committee and the Environmental Industries Council and found impediments to reducing waste in Tasmania included the cost disadvantages of a low population density and the limited competition in the domestic market for the purchase of recovered products.⁸³

The Committee supports the Collex Pty Ltd argument that “... this had to be a whole of government approach so that we could get a model that would work and that did not disadvantage people so that the operator, whether it was public sector, local Government, private sector or some combination, could get a return on their business.”⁸⁴

Collex Pty Ltd also supports “... the idea of a separate organisation that can initiate things and be the policeman as well. So it is just a question of how you fund that. Other jurisdictions have a waste levy.”⁸⁵

Mr. Michael Reardon from the Waste Management Association of Australia, Tasmania Branch, shares this view of the need for statewide leadership. He argues that “waste issues in 2005 include the need for State leadership as a regional approach is disjointed. The regional approach in the North and North-West hasn’t worked.”⁸⁶

He continues by suggesting that “the current regional approach to waste management should change to a statewide project. How do we move forward: promote the benefits to local government of a statewide levy and appoint a board of management which represents all stakeholders to advise government on how the waste levy would be implemented, and assist in the management of the waste levy.”⁸⁷

Submissions made to the Committee supported the introduction of a statewide waste management body. One exception to this was the Southern Waste Management Association, who contend that waste management should be dealt with by region and that support should be for extending regional programs rather than establishing a state body.⁸⁸ The Authority currently coordinates its member councils, and argues that the current

⁸² Jones, *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 81

⁸³ Waste Management Association of Australia, *Written Submission*, 12 November 2004, p. 14

⁸⁴ Ward, p. 22

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 23

⁸⁶ Reardon, *op.cit.*, p. 106

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 108

⁸⁸ Southern Waste Strategy Authority, *Waste Minimisation Manual Version 1.0 Annual Report 2003-2004*, Chief Executive Officer’s Report p. 7

structure recognizes the differences in population and resources across the region.⁸⁹ The Department of Primary Industries and Water also demonstrated support for the regional management of waste, stating :

“We have been actively encouraging a regional approach for quite a number of years. I think probably from the mid 1990’s on we recognized that tackling this simply on an individual local government basis was simply not going to work. Initially the driver was to get regional facilities so that we could get fewer, properly managed tips. I think we have moved on from there to say that regional waste management makes sense in a whole lot of other areas.”⁹⁰

Ms Mackeen, General Manager of Athena Waste Management agrees with the need for an element of statewide leadership, but supports the SWSA argument for regionally based delivery of services. “State managed waste management is too distant. Benefit would come from regional authorities managing a zero waste scheme. Local government is the key to really good waste management.”⁹¹

One of the current major issues for Tasmanian waste management is a lack of funding. Mr Jones points out that of the “... budget for the waste management area probably 70 to 80 percent of that is taken up by what you would define as core regulatory functions that are defined by the act. We regulate sewerage treatment plants out of that area. We regulate tips. We regulate waste transport businesses. We deal with contaminated sites. We regulate ozone still, for the moment. So the majority of our resources are consumed in that.”⁹²

Tasmania is the only State in Australia that does not have a separation between the policy maker and the regulator in the waste industry.⁹³ Other states that have established separate policy and regulatory bodies have chosen to address the issue of funding by the introduction of a landfill levy. The landfill levy is not only an incentive to recycle and reuse waste, but also places less demand on landfill space. The landfill levies per tonne that apply in other states, now and in the future, are shown in the table below.

Future Landfill Levies⁹⁴

Population Centre	2003/2004 Landfill Levy (\$/tonne)	Amount (\$/tonne)	Date Applicable
Sydney	\$19.80	\$25	July 2009
Melbourne	\$5.00	\$9	July 2007
Perth	\$3.00	\$6	Under consideration
Newcastle	\$11.40	\$25	July 2012

Levies are typically raised annually in equal increments. Actual amount of future levy may be higher than indicated as some states include CPI adjustment.

⁸⁹ Southern Waste Strategy Authority, Chairman’s Report, p. 4

⁹⁰ Jones, p. 84

⁹¹ Mackeen, p. 57

⁹² Jones, p. 85

⁹³ Ward, p. 2

⁹⁴ Nolan ITU, National Benefits of Implementation of UR-3R Process, p. 16.

Mr. Michael Reardon from the Waste Management Association of Australia argues that the option of a waste management levy should be considered for Tasmania because of many possible benefits. He claims that the introduction of a levy :

- “Promotes an equitable producer-pays system, which takes the current responsibility away from the general community and firmly places it with the waste producer or generator;
- Assists in the diversion and reduction of waste to landfill, as well as changing the composition of waste in landfills;
- Provides funding to upgrade existing and install new infrastructure for the processing of waste and recyclable. What we really lack is infrastructure;
- Increases the investment in resource recovery businesses, opportunities landfill and compost facilities for organic waste;
- Creates incentives to reduce waste and divert resources to value-adding processes and facilities;
- Provides funding to support landfill closure and the future monitoring of environmental impacts and liabilities;
- Assists in protecting the State’s tourism, primary industries and Tasmania’s clean green image;
- Provides funding for education programs, research and data processing facilities.”⁹⁵

The introduction of a waste levy appears to have had positive outcomes in other states. Mr Tim Rogers of the NSW Department of Environment and Conservation believes that “the levy has clearly driven the recycling of construction material. That has gone up very strongly over the past five years. It has had an effect on councils, as has the whole environmental aspect of recycling, but it has lifted the economics of kerbside recycling, and it has had an effect on commercial processes where the waste is heavy.”⁹⁶

Collex Pty Ltd pointed out that it is currently cheaper to bury the resource than it is to have an alternative.⁹⁷ The low cost of landfill has not helped Tasmanians to adopt the most productive mindset towards waste management. Mr Phillip Hine from the Department of Environment in Western Australia, argues that a levy could help to change this mindset, arguing that “the waste industry is not about the environment for most people, it is about money, and so you just have to tip the economic scales in favour of more desirable things. Cheap landfill just makes that the number one option.”⁹⁸

This argument indicates that increasing the cost of waste to landfill will

⁹⁵ Reardon, p. 107

⁹⁶ Rogers, Mr T., NSW Department of Environment and Conservation, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 June 2005, p. 11

⁹⁷ Brennan, Mr JC, State Manager, Environmental Services, Collex Pty Ltd, *Transcript of Evidence*, 21 November 2005 p. 14

⁹⁸ Hine, Mr Phillip, Manager – Environment Regulation Branch, Environmental Management Division, Department of Environment, *Transcript of Meeting*, 30 June 2005, p. 9.

encourage individuals and businesses to consider more carefully their waste practices in order to find the cheapest option. Mr Rogers agrees with this view, stating that "... part of the problem with waste is that it is not a major cost for most companies... if you are a small business 40 percent of you don't have a waste service at all; you use the street bin or you take it home and use somebody else's."⁹⁹

The concept of user-pays is introduced with a levy and people will have a visible incentive to do the right thing and achieve the waste management hierarchy. Ms Mackeen, Manager of Athena Waste Management believes that "the mindset of this is about responsibility and if I do not take responsibility I am going to have to pay for it."¹⁰⁰

If waste became a more significant cost for companies, it would appear that they would have greater motivation to seek out a cheaper, more environmentally appropriate practice. Whilst costs for landfill remain low, Tasmania will not achieve high standards of waste management.

The Southern Waste Strategy Authority (SWSA) has argued against the introduction of a compulsory waste levy. Mr Campbell, the Chairman of the SWSA believes that "it is a straight out tax. It is nothing more than a tax and local government was totally – I repeat, totally – opposed to it in any form."¹⁰¹

The issue, as the SWSA defined it, was the method of collection and direct usage of the levy.

"We know how it works in other States. It goes into Consolidated Revenue. We have checked out the figures and we certainly know from the Victorian example that it varies a little, but between 25 and 30 percent gets put back into the actual on the ground projects. This is why it is a form of tax – the money is not being directed back efficiently into providing the services that are needed on the ground, so you have Parks and Wildlife waiting to have a bin in the bush."¹⁰²

Western Australia provides a good example of financial management that avoids this problem. Western Australia has a "Waste Management and Recycling Fund" which receives all the income from the waste levy and in turn funds the statewide Waste Management Board.¹⁰³ The Board is responsible for leading advancement of waste management and for providing strategic advice to the Western Australian Government on waste management issues.¹⁰⁴

The South Australian Government funds its Environmental Protection Agency

⁹⁹ Rogers, op.cit., p. 8

¹⁰⁰ Mackeen, p.56

¹⁰¹ Campbell, Mr J., Chairman, SWSA, *Transcript of Evidence*, 21 April 2005 p. 97

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ *Statement of Strategic Direction for Waste Management in Western Australia*, September 2004

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

and ZeroWaste Board through a solid waste levy. Victoria funds its EcoRecycle through a similar landfill levy. A statewide body would also allow the setting of statewide waste reduction targets. Many states have adopted zero waste policies, or policies that aim towards an end outcome of zero waste. For example, the ACT has a “No Waste By 2010 Strategy”.

Mr. Warren Jones gave details of Tasmania’s current aims in this regard. “Tasmania Together isn’t looking for an aspirational target but perhaps a stretched realistic target...rather than an overall global and aspirational target, some targets might look at individual sectors of the waste stream and set some quantitative values for us to head towards.”¹⁰⁵

The Committee noted that the 2006/07 State Budget provided an allocation of \$100 000 (a total of \$400 000 over a four year period) to form an environment Protection Agency (EPA). “The EPA will have an independent chair and operate at arms length from Government. Legislative changes will be required to establish the EPA and priority will be given to implement these amendments”.¹⁰⁶

In determining Tasmania’s future waste management practices it is also important to consider world’s ‘best practice’ to ensure that the State is acting in accordance with international as well as national standards.

It has been suggested that Tasmania should review its current commitment to Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)¹⁰⁷ and enforce/encourage higher standards. Current German legislation obliges industry and the retail trade to take back sales packaging materials. Manufacturers and distributors that have paid a licensing fee to a third party, non-profit company may display a green dot on their packaging, and the money generated by the fee is used to recover the costs of collecting and processing the packaging. Part of the idea is to encourage manufacturers to optimize their packaging.¹⁰⁸

Recent evidence from the State Government points out that, “through the Environment Protection and Heritage Council, Tasmania is contributing to the development of a National Environment Protection Measure (NEPM) on Product Stewardship.

Significant progress has been made in negotiations with Tyre and Television producers toward the development of voluntary product stewardship schemes that will be supported by the above NEPM.

Ministers have recognised that the NEPM also needs the capacity to drive the establishment of product stewardship schemes in sectors where voluntary

¹⁰⁵ Jones, p 85

¹⁰⁶ Parliament of Tasmania, Operations of Government Departments 2006-07, Volume 2, p. 525.

¹⁰⁷ Extended Producer Responsibility is governed by the National Packaging Covenant, which can be found at:

<http://www.deh.gov.au/settlements/publications/waste/covenant/evaluation/index.html>

¹⁰⁸ Salford Translations Limited, information page on “German Green Dot” available at <http://www.salftrans.co.uk/english/engreen.htm>

progress is not satisfactory. The computer industry is an example of a fragmented sector that may require a regulatory 'push' across the whole sector to drive the creation product stewardship schemes".¹⁰⁹

Mr. David West, Environmental Consultant, Boomerang Alliance argues the case for CDL and EPR on similar lines. "Our stress is CDL as the pointy end of a broader EPR phase ..."¹¹⁰

Future strategies for hazardous waste should also be considered. At present clinical and quarantine waste gets buried (see also Chapter 3). However, by December 2007 an alternative must be found for clinical waste going to landfill.¹¹¹ Collex Pty Ltd argues that the management of these wastes is an under-developed opportunity because most hazardous wastes are generated in low volumes, rendering local investment economically unfeasible. This point further reinforces the need to have a statewide strategy, as on a state level the costs involved may be workable.

All levels of government, through their departments should instigate recycling programs and processes to lead by example. These programs and processes could then be piloted into other areas including private enterprise which will promote positive outcomes in the community.

Recommendations

The Committee recommends that :

- The State Government initiates a whole-of-government environmental audit, including an analysis of government procurement policies, to make recommendations to minimise waste generation, maximise the use of recycled products (i.e. paper), and minimise the environmental, social and economic impacts of disposal of government waste.
- The Tasmanian Government investigate Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) models with a view to understanding the impact of a national EPR system on Tasmania.
- The Tasmanian Government audit existing landfill sites and transfer stations with a view to ensuring that infrastructure and practices are upgraded where necessary, particularly in areas such as OH&S, security and ensuring that prohibited and hazardous wastes and recyclables are not disposed of in Tasmania's landfill sites.

¹⁰⁹ Jones, Letter dated 23 August 2006, p. 3.

¹¹⁰ West, p. 33

¹¹¹ Ward, p. 10

According to the Department of Primary Industries, Water and the Environment submission, “Public support and participation in waste processing can be pivotal in determining the material flows. This is particularly true for domestic waste recycling schemes, for which public involvement determines the volume of waste entering the recycling process. By changing our behaviours at the source, i.e. within the home, further gains could be made in waste reduction (by influencing consumer choice) and waste diversion from landfill to value adding processes.

Meeting our future waste reduction targets will depend on an ability to build a greater acceptance of the need to avoid producing waste. It is essential that the community as a whole accept a greater responsibility for the management of all wastes, especially those that pose a risk to human health or the environment. This requires the development of a balanced understanding of the ecological, economic and social issues involved, such that all sectors of the community are aware of individual responsibilities and have an opportunity to provide input to policy making at a local and State Government level”.¹¹²

Community education, therefore, is of major importance to assist in the management of waste. Previous chapters have indicated areas where education measures are required to encourage the Tasmanian community to not only recycle their waste, but to reduce and reuse. The Victorian Parliament’s recent inquiry found that “there is little community awareness of the difference between recycling and waste avoidance”¹¹³ and it was acknowledged that there was a need to redevelop the education program to “... reflect the principles of waste avoidance and a life cycle analysis”.¹¹⁴

Representatives of Southern Waste Strategy advised the Committee of their current community education programs. “Three quarters of our effort goes into the public awareness area. We target three quite different markets : schools, the general community and business. Some of the tools we use for all three of those and then there are some special purpose things we do in each area. For the schools we have a web site with a stack of information on it. We run a thing called Clean Schools Challenge which is basically a competition that encourages schools to set up their own waste management resource recovery projects. We have produced a recycling kit with a stack of information in it – resource information and so on. The general community brochures are there – fridge magnets, public place and major events recycling – so taking the recycling message beyond kerbside recycling to outside of the home.

¹¹² Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, p. 48.

¹¹³ Parliament of Victoria, Report of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee on the Inquiry into Sustainable Communities, Parliamentary Paper No. 140 Session 2003-05, p. 140.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

We run a litter campaign backed up by signage and about 2 500 litter bins around the region. For business we run a thing called The Clean Business Challenge and a number of other programs".¹¹⁵

Some Members of the Committee also met with waste management officers from other states in relation to their education programs. Educating the community about the issues mentioned above has significantly increased the volumes of waste recycled in those states.

Zero Waste SA has developed a waste-wise schools program which involves education and community engagement. "We are working with the Local Government Association and industry in terms of education assistance. We do quite a bit of community work such as public speaking, in the media and various newspapers, television and so on, trying to get information back to the community because they have to understand the issues here as much as the bureaucrats. We fund public events – waste management at public events – changing from throwaway containers to recyclable containers, changing plates from plastic into cornstarch so they can be composted".¹¹⁶

"Support is also available not only through us but from the EPA through their licence coordinators. We are influencing regional development boards as part of this process as well. We fund the person in the Local Government Association to deal with waste management issues for councils. Tidy Towns, Road Watch, Clean Site, all of those programs are underpinned through our funding. Local non-government organisations and councils rely on those to a degree. The Waste Management Association of Australia can offer training, contacts, research and development".¹¹⁷

In Victoria, experiences through activities and research indicate that the provision of information is not the only way to create change. "It is a great way to build awareness and to harness people's interest but to create change we have to work with people, whether that is through conversation or dialogue or by doing things together – we learn by doing things and many of our programs are about that. ...We provide a full range of tools and support people wherever we can but people have to make those changes themselves".¹¹⁸

"Our core programs include the Waste Wise program which actually encourages local governments to look at their own practices through developing an action plan to implement across council's own activities to reduce, reuse, recycle. ...

The other main program we have run with local government has been what started off as the Local Government Biorecycle Alliance, which encouraged councils to buy back recycled content products. ... It is now growing into ...

¹¹⁵ Griffiths, Mr Mike, Chief Executive Officer, Southern Waste Strategy Authority, Transcript of Evidence, 21 April 2005, p. 90.

¹¹⁶ Levitzke, Mr Vaughan, Chief Executive, Zero Waste, South Australia, Transcript of Meeting, p. 8.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 8-9.

¹¹⁸ Read, Ms Rose, Ecorecycle Victoria, Transcript of Evidence, 26 September 2005, p. 46.

the most substantial green purchasing program and the idea is to buy recycled content products and close the loop. They are putting materials out through kerbside, through our own municipal practices, out to be recovered and reprocessed. Let us finish it off by actually buying back the products and supporting those, I guess in some cases, fledgling small businesses or medium businesses to actually grow and develop new products on the market which are much more environmentally friendly”.¹¹⁹

Some Members visited the Gould Education Centre in Victoria which was an excellent facility for school children (and adults) focusing on litter and the reduction and recycling of waste. This centre works closely with local government and schools to develop a curriculum and in building a rapport with their communities. “...Some of the schools have reduced up to 95 per cent of their waste. Litter is a real issue in a lot of schools, so that is where they begin to develop their own systems which then become a real showcase and a point of contact between local government and the community as well. We often have schools involved in quite a number of our litter campaigns and activities at the local level as a way of educating the students”.¹²⁰

The ‘hands on’ approach of the Gould Centre allows students to be educated in a more interesting and informative manner. There is also evidence to suggest that children then influence what happens in their own home regarding recycling and waste minimisation.

The photos below show some of the displays and challenges involved at Gould.



Doug Parkinson MLC, former Chair of the Committee with Nick McKim MHA – checking out what is on offer in The Recycle Shop.

¹¹⁹ Read, p. 48.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

Dr John Cole, Executive Director of the Sustainable Industries Division of the Department of Environment in Queensland acknowledged the importance of community education. He believes that even with a “progressive approach to zero waste or waste elimination ... most of us in government have failed to adequately involve the community in the discussion. ...One of the critical things we have to do in the future is to help people, engage people in the process of being more aware of what is involved in the products and services they buy. How can you play a productive role if you do not know what is involved in the manufacture of the product you have brought, how much waste was generated?”¹²¹

The ACT agrees with the idea of keeping the public informed regarding waste management and recycling programs. However, “there is still a healthy scepticism in the community that recyclables go to landfill. It is one of those urban myths that we cannot seem to crack. We have extensive programs in place to show these facilities, show that the materials are sorted, show that they go off to the marketplace, talk to people about what materials you are looking at now. It is a really interesting one that there is this scepticism in the community.

... We are trying to stop this attitude of ‘Waste is someone else’s problem. I’ll generate it and I’ll consume and I’ll do this and I’ll do that but I want someone else to take care of this for me’. We want them to be responsible for waste. We want them to be linked into the economics of the waste stream, to take responsibility to separate the materials out where that is appropriate”.¹²²

Evidence provided by Collex Pty Limited in Tasmania states that “an integrated cross sectional education program could be adopted for the state and be delivered by state and local jurisdictions. Industry also has a role to play in consulting with and informing the community about processes and sustainable approaches to business with respect to waste management”.¹²³

It is evident that by educating the community in relation to waste management issues generally, we have a greater chance of being able to achieve our goals of moving towards a no waste society. Education programs should be a priority for all members of the community, beginning at early education and moving to all levels of education to reinforce the message.

Recommendation

The Committee recommends that a strategy, including a public education program be developed to maximise the deferral of reusables and recyclables from the waste stream and to improve the quality of recovered and recycled waste.

¹²¹ Cole, Dr John, Department of Environment, Transcript of Meeting, 27 September 2005, p. 4.

¹²² Horsey, pp. 7-8.

¹²³ Collex, p. 4.

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List of Witnesses

Appendix 1

3C Core Consultative Committee (Western Australia)
ACT NOWaste
Athena Waste Management
Australian Laser Charge
Beverage Industry Environment Council
Boomerang Alliance
Carswell, Mrs Jo
Collex Pty Ltd
Copping Refuse Disposal Site Joint Authority
Department of Environment and Conservation (New South Wales)
Department of Environment (Western Australia)
Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment
EcoRecycle Victoria
Environment Protection Authority (South Australia)
Environmental Protection Agency (Queensland)
Environment Protection Authority (Victoria)
Forster, Ms Lynne
Parsons, Dr Simon
Southern Waste Strategy Authority
Tasmanian Conservation Trust
The Waste Management Board (Western Australia)
Waste Management Association of Australia (Tasmanian Branch)
Zero Waste (South Australia)

Written submissions taken into evidence **Appendix 2**

Athena Waste Management
Australian Laser Charge
Beverage Industry Environment Council
Boomerang Alliance
Carswell, Mrs Jo
Collex Pty Limited
Copping Refuse Disposal Site Joint Authority
Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment
Environmental Systems and Contracting Pty Ltd
Forster, Ms Lynne
Godfrey, Mr Pete
Gough, Ms A J
Launceston City Council
Norske Skog Boyer
Parsons, Mr Simon and Tomas, Ms Katarina
Publishers National Environment Bureau
Recycled Refuse International Limited
Southern Waste Strategy Authority
Tasmanian Conservation Trust
Tasmanian Infection Control Association
Waste Management Association of Australia (Tasmanian Branch)
Zwart, Ms Rowena

Documents taken into evidence

Appendix 3

Brochure - "Garbage! Are you COPPING it Sweet?"

Email dated 15 November 2004 from Recycled Refuse International Limited enclosing a proposal for medical waste disposal

WME - Waste Management and Environment Magazine, Volume 15, Number 9, October 2004

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Simon Parsons - Meeting Notes

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Understanding Beverage Container Recycling

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Extended Producer Opportunity

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Waste Management Association powerpoint document

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Launceston City Council – Waste Management Department Annual Report 2002/03

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EMRC – Environmental Service

EMRC – Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council

EMRC – Resource Recovery Project

EMRC – Risk Management

EMRC – Regional Development

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The Business Sustainability Roadmap

Apply to join Ecobiz

Eco-efficiency

Brisbane City Council – Turning waste into wealth

No Waste by 2010 – A Waste Management Strategy for Canberra

Guide to Recycling for ACT Businesses

No Waste by 2010 – Turning Waste into Resources – Action Plan 2004-2007

ACT Materials Recovery Facility – statistics

Your Guide to Becoming a No Waste Household

No Waste – stickers and brochures

Gould League Presentation

Victorian Sustainable Schools Pilot Project

Waste and Recycle Conference 2005 – Waste Wise Schools : A Cultural Change Program

Letter dated 16 August 2006 from Michael Lemm, Manager, Australian Laser Charge providing additional information since their last submission.

Letter dated 17 August 2006 from Southern Waste Strategy Authority providing additional information in relation to possible national waste policy alternatives.

Letter dated 23 August 2006 from Warren Jones, Manager, Environment Division, Department of Tourism, Arts and the Environment providing a brief update of information since their last submission.