

7.1 PLAN TO SAVE OUR RECYCLING

Officer Mayor Liz Campbell
File No F19/2022
Attachments Nil

PURPOSE

I am calling on Councillors to support the local government sector's **Save Our Recycling campaign** as outlined in the Local Government NSW report *At the Crossroads: The State of Waste and Recycling in NSW*.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1 That Council acknowledges the growing imperative to manage waste and recycling within NSW and calls for urgent action from the State Government to help build a circular economy in NSW.
- 2 That Council recognises initiatives and projects taken within the Kempsey local government area to help achieve this goal, including:
 - a. restructuring Waste Services to be part of a commercial business unit working alongside Economic Development officers to achieve circular economy improvement opportunities;
 - b. increasing Waste Services resourcing levels to facilitate increased waste related strategic planning and education;
 - c. creating a sustainable schools network to improve waste management and education resources to support circular economy development;
 - d. creating a business waste management webpage;
 - e. providing a scheduled mobile Community Recycling Centre trailer service for household problem wastes that have resource recovery potential when source separated safely;
 - f. working with local social enterprises on recycling initiatives that achieve greater landfill diversion and resource recovery opportunities; and
 - g. the ongoing implementation of process improvements that will provide greater time and ability to focus on developing local circular economy solutions, strategic planning and community engagement.
- 3 That Council endorses Local Government NSW's sector-wide *Save our Recycling* campaign, and asks the State Government to reinvest the Waste Levy in:
 - a. Funding councils to collaboratively develop regional-scale plans for the future of waste and recycling in their regions
 - b. the delivery of the priority infrastructure and other local government projects needed to deliver regional-scale plans, particularly where a market failure has been identified
 - c. support for the purchase of recycled content by all levels of government, to help create new markets

- d. **Funding and delivery of a state-wide education campaign on the importance of recycling, including the right way to recycle, the purchase of products with recycled content and the importance of waste avoidance.**
- 4 **That Council write to the local State Member Melinda Pavey, Minister for Energy and Environment the Hon Matthew Kean MP, Local Government Minister Shelley Hancock, NSW Treasurer the Hon Dominic Perrottet MP, Premier the Hon Gladys Berejiklian MP, Opposition Leader Jodi McKay MP, Shadow Minister for Environment and Heritage Kate Washington MP, and Shadow Minister for Local Government Greg Warren MP to confirm its support for recycling and outline the urgent need to educate, innovate and invest in local waste and recycling services via the Waste Levy.**
- 5 **That Council advise LGNSW President Linda Scott of the passage of this Mayoral Minute**
- 6 **That Council shares and promotes the *Save Our Recycling* campaign via its digital and social media channels and via its networks.**

BACKGROUND

The NSW Government collects revenue from a Waste Levy via licensed waste facilities in NSW to discourage the amount of waste being landfilled and to promote recycling and resource recovery. According to the latest NSW Budget papers, this totalled \$772 million in 2018/19.

Council paid a total of \$1.07 million via the Waste Levy in the 2018/19 financial year. For the same period Council received back \$71,441 as the *Better Waste and Recycling Funding* to assist with waste management and recycling infrastructure, programs and education.

Revenue from the Waste Levy is expected to increase by about 70 percent from 2012/13 to 2022/23. By the end of this period the Waste Levy revenue is forecast to have increased to more than \$800 million a year: \$100 for every woman, man and child in NSW. Yet, only a small portion – less than one fifth – of this revenue is invested back into waste and recycling programs.

The NSW Government promised a major education campaign to help support kerbside recycling in 2015. However, this has not been delivered. A Waste Infrastructure Plan and a new Waste Strategy are also overdue.

The Government is also likely to miss key targets in its existing *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2014-21*. Its latest *2017/18 Progress Report* shows that in NSW:

- household recycling rates are decreasing
- less waste per person is being diverted from landfill
- the amount of waste being generated is expected to grow by 36 percent by 2036 – well above population growth.

Recent decisions by China and other countries to put in place measures to stop the importation of plastic and paper recycling from countries like Australia are also making it more challenging to find markets for recycled products.

This combination of a lack of funding, planning and action has left our state-wide waste and recycling systems in a poor state.

Local councils in NSW are calling on the NSW Government to reverse this downward slide: to invest the money it collects from the Waste Levy to help fix our state's ailing waste and recycling and help build a circular economy in NSW.

Local Government's Save our Recycling campaign outlines ways the State Government can work with us to properly develop, fund and deliver the waste and recycling systems our communities deserve.

It is a blueprint for the NSW Government to invest the money it collects from the Waste Levy to help fix our ailing recycling services and build a circular economy in NSW.

The campaign focuses on the following key areas for NSW Government action:

- **Education:** Fund a large-scale, state-wide education campaign to support recycling and markets for recycled products in NSW. The NSW Government must fund and work with councils to activate this campaign; community by community.
- **Innovation:** Greater use of more recycled content by all tiers of government to help create scale, and then new markets, jobs and investment will follow.
- **Investment:** Reinvest the Waste Levy in council-led regional waste-and-recycling plans and fund councils to deliver the infrastructure and services our cities and regions need.

In 2018, delegates at the LGNSW 2018 Conference unanimously voted to call on the NSW Government to reinvest the Waste Levy in recycling and waste infrastructure and programs.

The 2019 Conference further supported this approach, outlining specific solutions to the waste and recycling crisis which could be delivered in partnership with local government. These steps are outlined in the wording of this Mayoral Minute, and include:

- Funded regional waste plans for the future of waste and resource recovery developed by councils for their regions.
- Funding for and delivery of the priority infrastructure and other local government projects necessary to deliver these regional-scale plans, particularly where market failure has been identified.
- Increased local and state government procurement of recycled goods made with domestic content, e.g.:
 - recycled content targets to help drive demand and provide incentives to deliver on these targets.
 - funded research, development and delivery of recycling technologies and products generated from recyclables, particularly by local or regional councils.

I am recommending that we support the Save Our Recycling campaign, which is being coordinated on behalf of the sector by LGNSW.