

The Chairperson
Parliamentary Standing Committee
Municipal Waste Management Inquiry

Dear Sir/Madam

My interest in writing this submission to the inquiry is that currently I am representing the local community of Carramar on the Mindarie Regional Council Recycling project, at Neerabup and further being a representative on the Mindarie Regional Council Education Strategy Steering Group.

Functions Effectiveness Efficiencies

As a participant on these committees one salient point arises regularly – “there are many instances in which there is no consistency between collection and disposal of waste within the various councils of MRC or even all metropolitan councils”.

- A. Collection of rubbish – there is no consistency as to what type of rubbish goes into each bin or what rubbish should go in which bin.
- B. Hazardous Waste – there is no consistency as to what hazardous waste is and how each council deals with its disposal. A mini survey carried out by me on four northern Councils recorded inconsistencies in directions as to the disposal of hazardous waste. This inconsistency must ultimately lead to residents disposing of hazardous waste into their regular rubbish bins.

This must frustrate residents if they are moving from one council to another and not aware of a councils disposal requirement and ultimately to discard these items to their rubbish bin. Whilst I am aware that a hazardous waste collection system is about to be implemented, it should be obligatory that every metropolitan council should eventually offer the same advise to residents on any article for disposal – not just selected items.

Some councils produce calendars which show “A – Z” lists of items and there disposal – this information should be given to every rate payer and where possible “consistent” for all councils. The directive for a consistent approach of these items should be given by the Waste Management Board and adopted by all Councils.

Resource Recovery

The humble "AAA" battery – how many of these end up in general rubbish bins and ultimately in land fill because there is no education on disposal or collection facilities. Yes, some schools have collection programs however; there must be thousands that end up in land fill. There is little, if any, education advertising to the public on correct disposal and little collection facilities. Car batteries – there is again no consistent collection method. Telephone Directories – no recyclable suggestions.

These and many other items will finish up in land fill because the local or overseas markets make it financially non viable to collect.

Therefore if we are serious about recycling, then maybe some reward system could be devised to make these common items valuable to be collected.

Currently there is a mind set, if it's not financial to handle send it to land fill – this attitude has to change, even if there is a cost to be born by councils or the public.

Consultation with the Community

Currently the MRC Waste Education Strategy Steering Group has had input into a Hazardous Waste Collection Program which the State has approved funding of \$1 million per annum for three years. The object being for collection points around the metropolitan area for residents to dispose of hazardous waste correctly. Unfortunately, I understand that a program has been approved, however no public input has been sought with possible suggestions to the program. If the public are not involved or educated then most items will finish in the rubbish bin and into land fill.

So far this program has taken 7 months to date and we are still unable to obtain any financial figures on how the funds are to be spent, despite repeated requests.

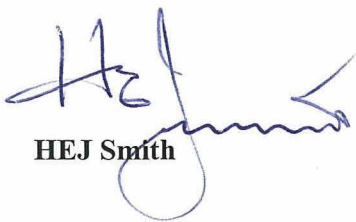
Other Education

If we are to reduce waste we must advertise and educate the public. In my time on the education committee we have talked about education but little, if any has been advertised to the public. I would suggest that there is a need for a consistent, regular message to the public from the Waste Management Board, outlining a message, strategy and to be implemented by all Councils.

The Waste Management Board should have a greater public profile and take leadership in an overall education plan.

Should any expansion on my submission be required I would be happy to appear before your committee.

Your truly



HEJ Smith