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The Hon. Sheila Mills, Chairman

Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs

Legislative Council

Parliament House

Perth

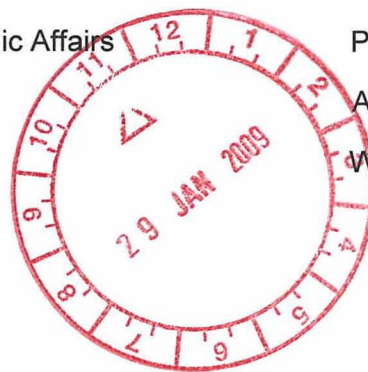
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Submission to the Enquiry into Municipal Waste Management in Western Australia.

Further to the notification of an enquiry into municipal waste management in Western Australia [P.62 the *West Australian*, Saturday December 6, 2008], I wish to make a submission to the Standing Committee enquiring into municipal waste management on a number of matters concerning waste management in rural and remote areas of Western Australia.

The Australian Government is a signatory to the Montreal Protocol to which the federal Hon. Minister for the Environment, Water Resources, Heritage and the Arts has an overseeing role on import, limitation and control of production and consumption of halogenated hydrocarbon substances capable of damaging the earth's atmospheric ozone layer. To this effect, I understand that the ratification of the Montreal protocol and the subsequent Amendments by the Commonwealth government are also binding on state and local governments.

There are a number of items that can and do enter the waste stream that are deposited at municipal waste dumps throughout Western Australia that contain sometimes substantial amounts of harmful chloro-bromo, or chloro-fluoro hydrocarbon gases in a compressed or liquefied state. These include refrigeration equipment, air-conditioners and certain types of fire extinguishers, all of which have become unserviceable for a variety of reasons. I am concerned that many smaller local government authorities do not have adequate provisions in place to ensure that all such defunct items are treated to remove and recover ozone-harmful halogenated hydrocarbons contained within and that the disposal of other such compounds, including but not limited to carbon tetrachloride, methyl chloroform, methyl bromide are also not released into the environment at land-fill sites. It should be noted that many land-fill sites in remote and regional W.A. are not fully manned or controlled to prevent surreptitious disposal of these gas-filled appliances or chemicals by a minority of the public.

The disposal of superseded and, or non-functional electronic equipment, including but not limited to personal computers, radios and television sets, CD and DVD recorder/players, mobile telephones and wet and dry batteries also represent a hazard to the environment as most of these items contain toxic or dangerous compounds or metals which may take many decades, or even centuries, to break down and become assimilated into the soil. I am concerned that there is little or no evidence of adequate and secure facilities in many rural and most remote land-fill sites for storage and subsequent removal of such items to centres where recovery, reprocessing or reuse may be undertaken.

Spent motor vehicle and engine and transmission oils need to be collected, stored correctly and recovered for re-processing at municipal land-fill and other waste disposal sites. Adequate facilities need to be installed and effectively maintained in all rural and remote

areas to ensure that these oils do not contaminate land-fill sites and that regardless of however remote the waste disposal site is located, that they are regularly serviced and the oils transferred for re-processing. I am concerned that this is not necessarily the case at present in some remote areas.

The unlawful dumping and general abandonment of non-functional motor vehicles in rural and remote areas of the State also poses environmental and aesthetic issues which are not being effectively addressed by some rural local government authorities. One only needs to travel on the Trans railway access road between Kalgoorlie and Rawlinna or the Great Central Road between Laverton and Warburton to appreciate the extent of this problem. Perhaps annualised on-going specific funding to the relevant local government authorities to recover abandoned motor vehicles for subsequent crushing and recycling of materials is necessary. This could also include vehicles actually deposited in remote waste disposal sites.

I would encourage the Standing Committee to also include investigation into waste disposal regimes in remote aboriginal communities as I believe that waste management standards are either very poor or non-existent in these communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the foregoing. I do not have any objection to this submission being published either in full or in part and I am prepared to appear before the Committee if so desired to elaborate on any part of this submission.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L.R. Anderson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

L.R. Anderson B.Bus., M.Sc. (Nat.Res.Mgt.)

23 January 2009