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Submission Response to Qld Waste Strategy Response 2010 - 2020

Having read through the document I found there us a lot of good data to build on and also a lot of repetitive statements. There are a lot of "feel good" statements and it is a matter of time to see if these come to fruition.

There is a real need to revisit Qld waste strategy and since the introduction of new waste regulations in Jan '09 there is a considerable amount of cross jurisdiction emerging between local and state governments. Local government planning scheme changes has created inconsistencies between the existing use rites of many landfill operations (including my own) and the new requirement for an ERA 62 from DERM under its new regulations. A solution to this anomaly should be found as quickly as possible. I feel that this responsibility lies squarely on the shoulders of DERM policy makers. The state governments needs to give special consideration or make exemptions during this transition period to allow current operators to remain compliant with local authorities but they also need to take ownership of the fact that they are the over-riding authority in these matters and as such they should issue the relevant ERAs. After considerable research into our own situation on the sunshine coast, with just over 2 years to run on our existing local government approval, I feel from information gained, that it's very likely the Sunshine Coast Regional Council will not renew our approval to rehabilitate our site which has another 6-8 years to run to completely finish filling the site. This has come about by changes to their planning scheme, but surely we have existing use rights under current approvals. As there are others in the same situation throughout Queensland, this position we find ourselves in, brought about by legislation changes, demands to be addressed. Landfill owners/operators cannot work for two masters. This is an impossible situation!

During this transition period, there needs to be a set of rules from DERM that includes no MCU and no DA requirement for those operators who have existing use rights on their landfill.

In my case, I have been involved over the last 10 years in the C & D waste disposal industry, and own and operate a small landfill on the Sunshine Coast with an approval MWM015. It has been very evident when trying to become legal and conform to DERM requirements, that the involvement of the local and state authorities are at cross purposes, leaving me caught in the middle with no clear direction or guide lines set in place for me and several others to follow. After a period of 10 months engaged in talks with both authorities, I am still waiting for answers. This problem should not be up to the individuals involved to sort out. There should be a clear policy set in place, a policy that is not retrospective and acknowledges existing use rights.

As stated on page 8 of the document, the establishment of infrastructure, obtaining approvals and design and planning facilities is very costly and time consuming. There is a real need to cut the red tape duplication and extensive delays in getting approvals to encourage private enterprise to build, own, and operate recycle facilities. There should also be incentives and funding available for private enterprise to move quickly to help get this program up and running.

QWS 2010-20 need to develop a simplified form of process where by there are no barriers to overcome in getting infrastructure and approvals in place to move into recycling and look to achieve the targets spoken of in this document. QWS 2010-20 needs to look outside of state boundaries and take on board others efforts in this field e.g. South Australia bottle refund.

As stated on page 14 (the last 3 items) there needs to be stronger encouragement for investment, jobs and advance planning. I think that this needs to be driven by the State, not Local government. On the Sunshine Coast there seems to be a mentality of delays, unnecessary cost and no desire to facilitate developing solutions for local issues which are critical in the local area.

I also feel that not including Municipal Solid Waste and self haul in this policy is a big mistake. There should be no reason not to include it and I would like to know why it has been excluded. It seems to me that because local government will be affected by MSN being excluded they are the ones with the most say. How can we achieve a target of recycle and recover of 65% MSW, if this waste stream is not included.

The pace at which systems are adopted and type of systems established will hinge on local government and other stakeholders and on the capacity of new technology to cost effectively meet community expectations. I feel this will work very effectively in Ipswich (Mayor Pissale) but not on the Sunshine Coast (Mayor Abbott).

The recycling targets suggested are achievable. There should be a reduction target initially – illegal dumping is already evident because of increased tipping fees. There should be a landfill diversion target, particularly C & D waste where 70% is easily achievable. There should be time allowed for infrastructure to be built also concessions and incentives to allow this to happen. This may include state government grants, low interest loans and on a local level, concessions on development charges e.g. headworks charges, as well as a need to stream line the approval process. I suggest that the less town planning has to do with it the better.

These comments have been made honestly and openly and I trust will be considered seriously in the consultative process, particularly the issues relating to new regulations and transitions.

Regards



Peter Whale