

Regional Waste Project

What is it?

NSROC Councils have been working together to examine how regional action can improve the availability of long-term, cost-effective waste solutions for member Councils. The project arose in response to the increasing cost of waste disposal and the limited market services available. A strategic planning process has been followed over the last 12 months to test the case for regional waste management. Research has included consultation with industry and waste professionals and collaboration with amongst waste management staff in Councils.

Currently, about half of the region's waste ends up in landfill; a disposal option that has continued to see steady price increases driven by the escalation under the NSW Waste Levy, the introduction of the carbon price mechanism, and increased costs arising from long haul transportation.

In common with all metropolitan areas of Australia, northern Sydney waste volumes are growing faster than population. This means that even though education programs and separation of waste by the householder have led to half of all household waste being recycled, the volume of waste requiring disposal keeps growing.

In May-June 2013 Councils will formally consider a project committing them to working in partnership under a single contract commencing in 2014 for disposal of residual ('red bin') waste. This contract will be the first stage of a longer term plan. During the initial contract period a longer term market solution will be developed to secure long term waste processing facilities for the region to improve diversion of waste from landfill and create marketable products from waste.

2013 Regional Initiatives



What will it achieve?

The Regional Waste Project supports shared Council objectives to achieve

- Better waste management
- Security in waste services for the future
- Greater market competition and innovation
- Price improvement
- Efficiency in business processes

Waste disposal in Sydney is dominated by a small number of large companies and improvement to economic and environmental outcomes is limited by the shortfall in alternative waste disposal and processing facilities accessible from the Sydney metropolitan area.

Regional action is the best form of advocacy for longer term improvement in waste facilities.

The planned 2014 contract will position NSROC Councils to engage with industry as an influential single customer, better able to demand that the market offer better solutions for alternative waste treatment, including the possibility of energy from waste thermal treatment, under a second stage contract commencing after 2017.

In March 2013 the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) released a new

set of waste programs to support higher levels of recycling and resource recovery. NSROC will work with its constituent Councils to develop proposals for regional projects, including assistance with the regional waste disposal tender project.

The EPA has also released a Draft Energy from Waste policy for comment. NSROC will be submitting a response to the draft, supporting regulatory change to allow a new approach to thermal treatment of waste residue, under strict environmental conditions.

These new policies and programs are designed to create incentive for investment in new forms of waste treatment by the private sector and by Councils owning waste assets or land suitable for such sites. As a region with all waste infrastructure owned by the private sector, NSROC is dependent on the existing facilities for the immediate three to four years.

How will it be done?

A tender for the region's waste will be developed in coming months, for issue later in 2013. Councils will use this process to advocate for the creation of more and better facilities to process waste. With a three year approval and build timeframe, this is a long-term process, requiring commitment by State and local government and the waste industry.

Sites in Sydney for processing organic material and mixed waste are critical for the future. Planning strategies for Sydney's growth should nominate sites for waste to be recycled, processed and disposed of.

NSROC Councils are depending on the new NSW policies for land use planning and waste management to support its efforts to meet the community's needs for modern, accessible and market-driven waste management by the end of the decade.

