

# Council happenings . . .

with Mayor  
Glenn Wall

## Waste Reduction and Recycling Services

During the last twelve months, 702 tonnes of recyclable material was collected from kerbside bins in Dungog Shire and delivered to the Theiss Materials Recycling Facility in Thornton.

This equates to 26% of total waste being removed from the domestic waste stream, but since our waste audits indicate that about 41% of total material is recyclable, there is room for improvement.

In addition to the kerbside program, Council provides a number of other services, which with community support divert significant quantities of recyclable or reusable material from the waste stream.

Over the last twelve months, 50 tonnes (400 cubic metres) of cardboard and paper was collected free of charge at the landfill for reprocessing, and a total of 4000 litres of waste mineral oil was collected free of charge at the landfill and Gresford Council depot for recycling.

Additionally, 300 tonnes of ferrous and 16 tonne of non ferrous metals were collected free of charge at the landfill and sold to scrap dealers, and over 200 veterinary and agricultural chemical containers were deposited in the free DrumMuster service.

Over the past two years 1750 cubic metres (673 tonne) of shredded green waste was either used in council and community projects, or sold back to the public at the cost of shredding. Green waste is stored separately at the landfill and allowed to settle before being shredded when a viable quantity has been collected. Tipping fees for clean green waste have been reduced to encourage separation from the general waste stream.

Over the past twelve months the council operated reuse shop at the landfill has been particularly well patronised by the general public. Items such as bric a brac, furniture, building materials, tools, books etc are diverted from the waste stream for reuse by the community.

We employ two staff who do a marvellous job in redirecting waste and managing the landfill site. Our domestic waste charge is cheaper than all our neighbours and we are well above the Hunter average for kerbside recycling rates.

However, strict environmental requirements render landfills expensive to operate and rehabilitate, so we need to maximize our recycling efforts in order to extend the life of our landfill and contain costs.

With present legislation, local communities share these costs and subsidize those who create excessive waste. Our current programs work from the wrong end of the waste stream and only address part of the problem.

It is high time that the NSW Government introduced container deposit legislation and required at least some extended producer responsibility for packaging including measures to encourage reduction and innovation on the part of those who create the packaging materials in the first place.

Note: Our domestic recycling rate is about 63% of what could be achieved.  
18 July 2007