

Council happenings . . .

with Mayor
Harold Johnston

Landfill and Waste Operations

At the March 2014 Ordinary Meeting of Council, a report was received detailing the landfill operations and Councils waste collection and recycling programs for the last half of 2013.

For the full year the quantities of recyclables collected was 818.94 tonnes, which was about 60 tonnes less than the previous year.

During the last half of last year, 25.5 tonnes of paper product was diverted from the waste stream for reprocessing and reuse. The amount of paper product collected appears to remain similar from year to year.

A waste mineral oil service is provided free of charge at the landfill and at Gresford. Collection tanks were first installed at the Short Street site and at the old Gresford works depot site in July 2003. During the last half of 2013, 4900 litres were collected from the two deposit points for reprocessing.

Ferrous and non ferrous metal collection has been provided at the landfill for many years and provided an income stream to Council's waste operation, which of course reduces the cost burden on the community.

The ferrous and non ferrous metals are separated and removed under contract on a regular basis. The value of this metal fluctuates with the scrap metal open market.

During the last half of last year, 143 tonnes of ferrous metal was sold for recycling, with a return to the community of approximately \$24,500. There were also 4.5 tonnes of non-ferrous metals and 3.4 tonnes of car batteries with a total value of approximately \$5,200.

Gas bottles are a problem waste and expensive to dispose of due to special handling and reprocessing requirements. A little over 200 stored gas bottles were removed from the waste facility in November 2013 at a cost of around \$2,000. There is now a new fee structure in place which will enable the disposal cost to be met without adding to the general landfill operating costs.

Greenwaste is also separated at the landfill and processed for reuse by Council or sale back to the general public. Processing of greenwaste took place last November and provided approximately 1284 cubic metres of material. The recent storm has generated a lot of greenwaste that will be processed by Council's own woodchipper. The collection and processing of greenwaste is a target area of the NSW Government's waste policies.

The E-waste collection service was provided free of charge, and during the last six months of last year about 6 tonnes of television and computer related material were collected at a cost of disposal of \$4640. It was disappointing to see that during the recent bulky goods cleanups, many televisions and monitors were left out for the cleanup, meaning that these recyclable items go straight to landfill.

Council also provides a DrumMuster service at the Short Street landfill for clean veterinary and agricultural chemical containers. This service has redirected over 500 containers of various sizes; however I am sure that this service could be better used.

The annual bulky goods and scrap metal collection was carried out in February 2014. The service is available to all properties that are provided with a general waste collection service.

Whilst collected material was not weighed, a total of 20 waste transfer truck loads of general bulky waste was collected, estimated to weigh about 350 tonnes. This was placed in the landfill.

19 truck-loads of scrap metal was collected that weighed about 100 tonnes. This steel is stored at the Dungog Waste Management facility for reprocessing and, depending on the price of scrap, will yield an income of \$10-\$15,000 which will assist in offsetting waste management costs.

Council continues to get positive comments about the reuse shop. The large amount of material currently being diverted from the waste stream also provides longer term benefits to ratepayers by extending the life of the current landfill.

Council is also required to pay a waste levy to the NSW Government for waste placed in landfill. During the last half of 2013, 1193 tonnes of waste was deposited at the landfill at a cost of \$63,830.

The State Government requires this Council to have a future strategy to improve our diversion rate from landfill. Simply put, we need to recycle more of our waste. This can only be achieved with the help and cooperation of everyone in the community.

26 March 2014