

Tuesday, 9 January 2006

NEW LANDFILL LEVIES TO ELIMINATE INDUSTRIAL WASTE

Acting Premier John Thwaites announced today that the Government would not proceed with the proposed long term waste containment facility after an independent panel recommended against constructing the facility at Nowingi.

“The Bracks Government set up an independent expert panel process to have this proposed facility examined dispassionately and at arm’s length,” Mr Thwaites said.

“While Government’s preference was to have a long term facility at Nowingi, we said all along that we would abide by the independent panel’s finding.

“It is clear from the panel report that while such a facility is environmentally feasible, there are planning concerns.

“In light of the Panel's recommendations, the Government has ruled out examination of any other sites for a new long term waste containment facility in Victoria.”

“The Bracks Government will drive new technologies to reduce prescribed industrial waste with the aim of eliminating it from landfill.

“This will be achieved by substantially increasing the levy on industrial waste and investing the proceeds in technology to further reduce the amount of waste.”

As announced in the Environment Sustainability Action Statement last year, landfill levies will increase from \$26 a tonne to \$130 per tonne on 1 July 2007.

Mr Thwaites announced the Government would further increase the levy to \$250 per tonne on 1 July 2008.

The levy will raise about \$30 million over the next four years and will fund investment in new technologies for reuse, recycling, reprocessing and recovery of industrial waste.

“Rising landfill levies, improving treatment technologies and industry assistance programs will continuously drive the waste volumes down by 5000-6000 tonnes a year,” Mr Thwaites said.

“The annual volume of industrial waste generated across the state has fallen by 27 per cent to 89,000 tonnes a year since 2000.

“The Government’s measures will reduce hazardous waste by at least 30 per cent, to about 60,000 tonnes per annum next year and about 40,000 tonnes per annum within approximately two years.

“As a community we must find ways to deal responsibly with the by-products of industry.

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“The Bracks Government is committed to removing these wastes from landfill by 2020 and the measures I’m announcing today will take Victoria a long way towards this goal.

“There will not be another siting process for a long term containment facility. The Government will rely on the Lyndhurst landfill for safe management and disposal of industrial waste until 2020.”

Mr Thwaites said technologies to improve waste treatment, reprocessing and recovery would become more viable as costs of disposal, including transport, rose above \$450 per tonne.

With a levy at \$250, the cost of disposal will rise in total to between \$550 and \$600 per tonne, making treatment and avoidance of waste more attractive than landfill.

For example, some valuable materials may be recovered through waste treatments such as stabilisation, cold chemical processes and thermal destruction or pyrolysis.

Some wastes with high calorific value oils and other materials may also be converted to fuels, although final wastes from these processes may still require safe management and disposal.

The Planning Minister, Justin Madden, today released the independent panel report and his assessment of the report.

Mr Madden thanked the panel for its hard work over the past few months investigating and considering the environmental and planning issues associated with the proposed Nowingi site.

The panel gave the site the environmental all-clear, but recommended against granting planning approval on the grounds that the panel believed the site did not meet certain planning criteria.

“The Government, as the proponent, has decided not to go ahead with the long term waste containment facility at Nowingi,” Mr Madden said.

“In light of the Government’s decision not to proceed with this site, I will formally abandon the planning scheme amendment process.”