



HUON VALLEY COUNCIL

MEDIA RELEASE

20 April 2018

Chinese recycling decision affecting Australian councils

A recent decision by the Ipswich City Council in Queensland to scrap all recycling has highlighted a growing problem in Australia.

Ipswich City Council recently said China's import ban on recycling and the rising level of contaminated or non-recyclable rubbish in yellow bins meant it had become too costly for the city to recycle, so from now everything placed in yellow bins would go straight to landfill.

Several councils in New South Wales, including some in Sydney, are weeks away from abandoning their recycling schemes.

President of Local Government New South Wales Linda Scott said a number of councils were struggling to process recycling and funding was needed.

Huon Valley Council Commissioner Adriana Taylor said that while unfortunate, the Chinese decision may present opportunities for local government and local entrepreneurs. Ultimately it makes sense that waste is processed within Australia if we are to move to a circular economy.

“Residents of the Huon Valley need to be aware that this issue faces their Council as well.

“The Huon Valley Council has been proactive in lessening the impact of contamination in recycling. The report from Queensland states more than half of the city of Ipswich’s recycling is contaminated (and therefore goes to landfill).

“Huon Valley residents should be commended, the levels of contamination in our kerbside recycling are considerably lower, meaning residents are doing the right thing in most cases.

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“Council has started a series of short informative videos on social media explaining the problems we face with recycling and how to make it easier.

“The ReUse Shop at our Southbridge Waste Transfer facility has gone from strength to strength, and every item purchased from the ReUse Shop is an item that hasn’t gone into landfill, and every dollar raised helps keep the cost to residents of dealing with waste in the Valley from rising.

“The full impact of China’s new legislation is yet to be realised.

“This is a very dynamic time for Australia’s recycling industry and recycling practices will likely need to change. In the near term it is vitally important that we further reduce contamination rates.

“Council asks that residents ensure that recyclable materials are rinsed prior to placement in the recycling bins. Cardboard products such as pizza boxes are unlikely to be accepted as just the grease stains, let alone food residues, are sufficient to contaminate those products for recycling purposes.

“We urge all residents to consider that contamination in one person’s bin can lead to an entire truckload of recycling being sent to landfill. Please consider this when recycling and if it’s dirty or you are unsure whether it can be recycled, put it in the general waste bin instead. In short, ‘if in doubt, throw it out.’

“We will continue to monitor the situation and provide further advice to residents as and when additional changes to recycling practices are required,” Commissioner Taylor said.

For more information
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