



SOUTH WEST GROUP

The South West Group, formed in November 1983, is a Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils (VROC). It comprises the Cities of Cockburn, Fremantle, Melville, and Rockingham, and the Towns of East Fremantle and Kwinana.

The South West Group seeks to work with these six local governments and through cooperation with industry, community and the other spheres of government to capture a wide range of opportunities to enhance economic growth as well as supporting a diversity of quality lifestyles whilst servicing and sustaining cohesive, productive communities in an enviable environmental setting.

The South West Group will be persuasive, forward looking and influential in representing, supporting and promoting Local Government interests that affect the growth and sustainable development of South Metropolitan Perth.

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SOUTH METROPOLITAN REGION

KEY INFORMATION

Area	619.4 square kilometres (approximately 50 km long by an average 12km width)
Location	South Western Quarter of Metropolitan Perth bounded by the Canning River, Swan River, Fremantle Harbour, Cockburn Sound, Warnbro Sound and generally 2 km east of the Kwinana Freeway alignment.
Economic Infrastructure	Fremantle Port, Australian Marine Complex, Kwinana Industrial Area, HMAS Stirling, Jandakot Airport
Current Population 2006	331,301 (ABS 2008)
Projected Population 2021	421,500 (WAPC 2005)
Working Age Population	223,600 (ABS Aged 15-64 Jan 2008)
Employment Rate	75.7% (ABS Jan 2008)
Labour Force	178,283 (Workplace Portal December 2007)
Unemployment Rate	3.3% (Workplace Portal December 2007)
Indigenous Population	1.4% (Census 2006)
Overseas Born Population	31.5% (Census 2006)
Mean Taxable Income	\$7,525.43 million (ATO 2005/6)
Building Approvals	\$1,148million (ABS 2005/06)



SOUTH WEST GROUP SUBMISSION

Introduction

The Waste Sector is a complex distributed activity operated by both the private sector and the government sector with a strong interface to the community. The behaviour of the wide range of landfill sites under differing ambient and geological conditions and at various maturities is not well understood. Many landfill sites are uncapped and have a wide variety of constructions.

The contribution of the Waste Sector to overall Greenhouse Gas Emissions is estimated at between 3 to 4%.

Many communities have been working to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions from waste by recycling, processing, waste reduction and methane harvesting. The imposition of a price signal for Greenhouse Gas Emissions may not drive the significant investment required to dramatically reduce emissions.

Extent of coverage

If the Waste Sector is covered will landfills which are operated by local governments, statutory bodies or state governments be captured under the scheme?

Measurement

The different characteristics of both waste and waste disposal sites as well as the extensive areas involved make measurement and modelling emissions difficult. It is accepted that some progress is being made on measurement but it would be premature for the waste sector to be covered until emissions could be modelled and assessed with greater accuracy.

Liability

There is a long lag time after a landfill is closed to when emissions decline to negligible levels. Many landfills have been developed into sporting and recreation facilities and are very extensive in area. What liability will there be for land owners to measure emissions from previous landfill sites? Will local government need to resume accountability for closed or inoperative landfill sites? Some local government landfill sites have been sold to the private sector and are used as car parks, access roads and golf courses. Schools and universities also have purchased previous large scale landfill sites in Western Australia. Does the current owner assume liability to measure and manage emissions?

Threshold

Regional cooperation between local governments has resulted in improved management of larger landfill sites and lower environmental impacts. The way in which a threshold is set should not encourage a return to a plethora of smaller landfills.

Incentives

Leaving the waste sector uncovered will provide incentives to invest in resource recovery, recycling, composting and recovery of embedded energy through generation of offsets. The predicted level of a "Carbon Tax" will not provide sufficient motivation to make the large investment necessary to significantly reduce emissions from the waste sector.

Conclusion

The waste sector should ultimately be covered but not for the next decade. Ten years will provide sufficient time to better develop the modelling and measurement systems, provide incentives through developing offsets to improve sector performance, to understand the optimum level to establish thresholds and to reduce the unintended impacts of introduction of the scheme.