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## **Draft WA State Waste Infrastructure Plan - Goldfields Esperance Region – GVROC Response**

The Goldfields Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils (GVROC) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation's *Draft Western Australia State Waste Infrastructure Plan*. There is growing concern with landfill and the issues with waste recovery and recycling challenges for many of the Local Government Authorities (LGAs) in the Goldfields Esperance (GE) region, and the GVROC acknowledges the need for a more cohesive waste management plan as a high priority but is concerned that the current plan is too broad in its recommendations for the region.

As stated in the Draft Plan, the remote and large (one third the size of WA) Goldfields Esperance region has significantly low population density and ageing landfill sites, some of which will be closed by 2030. As a vital next step for the GE region, GVROC believes there is a need to include industry in future infrastructure planning, particularly mining, which is a major contributor to waste in the region.

In Table 31 the Draft Plan outlines a set of Principles for consideration, including highlighting the need to expand existing services (particularly at Kalgoorlie and Esperance) that have established access to feedstocks and downstream markets to cope with an additional forecasted 14,000 tonnes of waste.

The issue of shared focus facilities for landfill, recycling and organics in the region has always been the cost of transport between facilities, particularly from the small and more remote towns, given the large distances between towns in the region. Transfer of waste across such large areas incurs not only a monetary cost, but also carbon costs.

Developing more cost-efficient transport corridors to agreed waste processing facilities and businesses, with some that can ultimately generate income for the region, requires more in-depth feasibility analysis to better understand where this is a viable option. GVROC therefore recommends that more guidance, support and incentives are required before the LGAs can make informed decisions on this approach.

Under the *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030*, if the State government chooses to stop certain types of waste from landfill, then GVROC requests that more sustainable cost-effective methods are developed prior to the changes, so Local Government is not left with the responsibility of dealing with the waste.

It is difficult to attract investors to the region due to the remoteness of most facilities which increases operational costs significantly and often deters LGAs from being able to do more. Most of the waste facilities are too small and investors can be put off by the economies of scale and the boom and bust nature of mining towns. There needs to be more incentives provided for waste industry investors in the region which can't be fully covered by LGAs.



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The smaller Northern Goldfields LGAs have flagged the idea of a shared compactor and baler to better utilise landfill sites as a more cost-effective alternative and this could be a part of the additional analysis.

The document also recommends development of a consolidation facility for scrap metal in Esperance to facilitate low risk recovery of scrap metals in the region. The economics of scrap metal recovery in the region has always come down to the global price of steel and it has consequently been an industry that has been marginal for the region.

Exporting scrap metal has been done on limited occasions from the Esperance Port, however due to the Port being close to houses and within the CBD, there are noise limits which can be an issue with handling, since the metal is bought in skips and then needs to be sometimes cut and tipped into the hold which results in a slow rate of loading. There is no capacity at the Esperance Port to store the metal, which therefore requires double handling, adding costs to the process. This recommendation would require further analysis.

GVROC has also flagged the need to identify suitable land and land use planning, plus transport corridors, in relation to waste management to produce economic outcomes, through attracting service providers who will invest in the region.

In Table 31, there is a statement that land surrounding Kalgoorlie is free of development constraints. This often isn't the case, with land access, mostly due to mining and native title claims, across much of the Goldfields region posing a challenge.

The Shire of Coolgardie has recently developed a class III landfill cell at its Coolgardie Waste Facility to accept waste from other organisations and the mining industry. In the near future, the Shire of Esperance plans to cart its landfill to Coolgardie and Esperance is currently developing a new FOGO and waste management facility 15km to the north of town.

The Shire of Coolgardie is also looking into development of an ultrasonic thermolytic synthesis plant to convert wastes into bioenergy, composite materials and export valued products. This could be beneficial for the region based on the capacity to utilise energy derived from the waste (both syngas and oil) as energy supply to neighbouring mines, composite material for use by the Shire and mining operators and the proximity to the Esperance port for exporting of valued derived products.

Tyres are an issue for all LGAs across the region and finding a processing solution that will hopefully also curb illegal tyre dumping would be welcomed and needs further analysis and support. There is also concern regarding smaller mining companies, under the current Mining Act, being able to dump significant amounts of tyres in bushland areas and this needs to be reviewed.



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Waste generation, infrastructure and needs in remote Aboriginal communities is an issue in the Northern Goldfields. A greater understanding of these needs is required, along with solutions to some very complex waste issues currently managed by the Remote Essential and Municipal Services (REMS) program. Dumped car bodies are also a big problem for LGAs in the region and this on-going issue needs further attention.

More waste education awareness is also needed for many of the towns, particularly those managed by the REMS and also the mining towns areas that have transient populations.

In closing, the GVROC believes there is a disparity of costs and services in regional WA compared to the metropolitan areas, and to provide an even playing field, more subsidies and other forms of support that will lead to more permanent infrastructure investment in the region is required to bring confidence through a more structured and fit for purpose waste management plan for the GE region. The *Draft Western Australia State Waste Infrastructure Plan* is a good start at preparing our State for a circular waste economy, but there needs to be a lot more in-depth research and planning undertaken for the GE region to ensure that infrastructure investment supports the region to meet future State Government waste targets.