

Resolution of Council

18 November 2019

Item 13.6

Waste to Energy

Moved by Councillor Scott, seconded by Councillor Miller -

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note:
 - (i) total NSW waste generated per capita rose from 2.42 tonnes to 2.69 tonnes per capita over the three years to 2017-18;
 - (ii) NSW recycling rates (percentage of total waste stream recycled) are flat lining, from 65 per cent in 2016-2017 to 65 per cent in 2017/18; and
 - (iii) overall, the total tonnes of NSW waste disposed into landfill increased by 8 per cent between 2015-16 and 2017-18;
- (B) Council note, under our 'Leave Nothing to Waste Strategy and Action Plan, that the City of Sydney:
 - (i) strongly supports the circular economy;
 - (ii) places a priority on recycling waste before utilising alternatives like waste to energy; and
 - (iii) has a target of 90 percent of waste being diverted from landfill by 2030;
- (C) Council note:
 - (i) that the NSW Government is currently preparing a 20-year Waste Strategy, aimed at providing a long-term vision and road map for reducing waste, driving sustainable recycling markets and improving the waste infrastructure network;

- (ii) the Minister for Energy and Environment, Matt Kean MP, has expressed the view that there is no social license for a Waste to Energy Plant in the Sydney basin;
 - (iii) the Shadow Minister for Health, Chris Bowen MP, has noted “Another stupid proposal to build a bloody big incinerator in our community, this time at Horsley Park/Eastern Creek. No amount of spin our “clean energy” changes the fact that this is a massive incinerator which will emit fumes right across Western Sydney”; and
 - (iv) UNSW Scientia Professor Sahajwalla’s comments that “It is not a good idea to burn materials for the purpose of generating energy”;
- (D) Council endorse that:
- (i) waste to energy technology is not a sustainable waste management option as it treats waste as a single use commodity;
 - (ii) the City of Sydney will pursue an effective circular economy strategy, prioritising the reduction of waste and, where not possible, a recycling strategy that effectively re-uses waste wherever possible;
 - (iii) waste to energy plants contribute to emissions and are not renewable as they depend on single use waste for fuel; and
 - (iv) waste to energy technology should only be used to meet our targets set out in the City’s ‘Leave Nothing to Waste Strategy and Action Plan’ once all options for reducing waste and recycling waste have been thoroughly examined and exhausted; and
- (E) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to develop stronger targets for waste reduction, and recycling, and bring back to Council an amended “Leave Nothing to Waste Strategy and Action Plan’ in early 2020, in order to drive a more sustainable outcome.

Note – the motion above was not carried. The amended resolution below was carried –

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council notes:
- (i) total NSW waste generated per capita rose from 2.42 tonnes to 2.69 tonnes per capita over the three years to 2017/18;
 - (ii) NSW recycling rates (percentage of total waste stream recycled) are flat lining, from 65 per cent in 2016/17 to 65 per cent in 2017/18;
 - (iii) overall, the total tonnes of NSW waste disposed into landfill increased by 8 per cent between 2015/16 and 2017/18; and
 - (iv) diversion rates have been negatively affected by an Environment Protection Authority (EPA) decision to ban the application of mixed waste organics outputs to land;

(B) Council notes, under our 'Leave Nothing to Waste Strategy and Action Plan, that the City of Sydney:

- (i) prioritises:
 - (a) 1. promoting innovation to avoid waste;
 - (a) 2. improving recycling outcomes;
 - (b) 3. sustainable design;
 - (c) 4. clean and clear streets;
 - (d) 5. better data management; and
 - (e) 6. future treatment solutions;
- (ii) strongly supports the circular economy;
- (iii) works collaboratively across multiple sectors to achieve impact at scale;
- (iv) places a priority on recycling waste before utilising alternatives like waste to energy; and
- (v) has a target of 90 percent of waste being diverted from landfill by 2030;

(C) Council note:

- (i) the City commenced the first phase of its residential food scraps collection and recycling trial on 29 July 2019. A total of 330 houses and 53 apartment buildings are taking part in the trial, making the new service accessible to just over 4,300 homes;
- (ii) initial results from the trial as reported in a CEO Update indicate early success. In the five weeks since the trial started, the City has collected and recycled 14.29 tonnes of food scraps which has been converted to high quality fertilizer and a clean source of gas;
- (iii) bin contamination has been low, and is estimated at less than 5 per cent by weight with only 15 reported incidents of contaminated bins to date, showing that the majority of residents participating in the trial are using their food scraps recycling bin correctly;
- (iv) in February 2019, the NSW Government released its 'NSW Circular Economy Policy Statement – Too Good To Waste';
- (v) that the NSW Government is currently preparing a 20-year Waste Strategy the Minister for Energy and Environment, Matt Kean MP, has expressed the view that there is no social license for a Waste to Energy Plant in the Sydney basin;
- (vi) the Shadow Minister for Health, Chris Bowen MP, has noted "Another stupid proposal to build a bloody big incinerator in our community, this time at Horsley Park/Eastern Creek. No amount of spin our "clean energy" changes the fact that this is a massive incinerator which will emit fumes right across Western Sydney"; and

- (vii) UNSW Scientia Professor Sahajwalla's comments that "It is not a good idea to burn materials for the purpose of generating energy,";
- (D) Council endorse that:
- (i) waste to energy technology is not a desirable waste management option for any waste that can be reused or recycled as it treats waste as a single use commodity;
 - (ii) the City of Sydney is pursuing an effective circular economy strategy, that incentivises innovation, prioritising the reduction of waste and, where not possible, a recycling strategy that effectively re-uses waste wherever possible; and
 - (iii) waste to energy plants contribute to emissions and are predominantly not renewable as they depend on single use waste for fuel; and
- (E) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to the Minister for Energy and the Environment the Hon. Matt Kean restating the City's position and priorities in support of waste avoidance and the preference for circular economy solutions, and that any consideration of waste to energy plants in NSW should be restricted to use for waste that cannot be reused or recycled, and should only be built once strong mandatory recycling targets are in place in NSW.

The amendment was carried on the following show of hands –

Ayes (8) The Chair (the Lord Mayor), Councillors Chung, Kok, Miller, Phelps, Scully, Thalys and Vithoukias

Noes (1) Councillor Scott.

Amendment carried.

The amended motion, as varied by consent, was carried unanimously.

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