

Our File: HCC19/329  
Enquiries: Bernadette Thomas  
Telephone: 9205 2423



Friday, 10 May 2019

The Secretary  
Environment and Planning Committee  
Parliament House  
Spring Street  
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

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Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: INQUIRY INTO RECYCLING AND WASTE MANAGEMENT**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information in response to the Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management currently being undertaken by the Legislative Council Environment and Planning Committee of the Parliament of Victoria. Council's Acting Manager Sustainable Environment and Waste, Bernadette Thomas, attended the public hearing on 3 May 2019 to give evidence to the inquiry on behalf of Hume City Council.

Hume is aware of the content of the submission being presented to the Inquiry by the Municipal Association of Victoria and shares many of the same concerns.

Hume City Council has been impacted by recent events within the waste industry; the illegal stockpiling of chemical waste, industrial scale fires as a result of illegal storage of waste materials, and the failure of Council's recycling contractor to accept and sort materials. In addition, Council must liaise with different government departments and agencies; as a landfill and resource recovery centre operator, council must collect the Landfill Levy on behalf of government.

***Illegal stockpiling of chemical waste***

Since December 2018 Hume has been notified by WorkSafe and the Environment Protection Authority of eight sites within the Hume municipality where the stockpiling of millions of litres of waste chemicals has occurred. Council is working with the agencies on the safe analysis and removal of these wastes, allocating emergency management, planning investigations, and recovery resources to assist with the removal process.

***Industrial scale fires***

Since 2015, Hume has been subject to five major industrial scale fires where the combustible material was some form of waste material (Ecotech – Nov 2015, Tyre Crumb – Feb 2016, SKM – July 2017, Compost – April 2018, Campbellfield – April 2019) causing impacts to public health and the environment. Each of these incidents demand intensive resource allocation in the form of incident response, community recovery, and environmental protection and recovery by Council. The Hume community has expressed their anger and frustration at the repeated nature and intensity of these incidents, and the impacts to public health and business continuity.

***Failure of Council's recycling contractor, SKM***

The recent recycling crisis impacted greatly on Hume. As a customer of SKM and with no other option available, Council was forced to send recyclable materials to landfill for just over four weeks, at considerable additional cost and in opposition to the community's expectation that recyclable materials will be processed. Council's contract with SKM is for the acceptance and processing of recyclables. The contract does not extend to market development, and as such Council is not informed of the destination of the materials.

### ***Waste Management in Victoria***

Waste management across the Victorian Government is shared between many government departments and agencies (the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning, Environment Protection Authority, Sustainability Victoria, and, in Melbourne, the Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Group), as no single agency has ultimate responsibility for directing the waste and resource recovery agenda. As a result, Local Government must negotiate with each of these government bodies across the full complement of waste related issues such as: infrastructure planning and investment, Landfill Levy, environmental protection and regulation, waste education/community engagement, research and development, contracts, and grant funding, as well as other government departments, such as Local Government Victoria for governance related issues such as seeking exemptions under the *Local Government Act*.

Hume's most recent experience with the illegal stockpiling of hazardous waste in industrial sites has meant that we must now also liaise with WorkSafe in relation to incident response and recovery, and ongoing management of this issue.

Such a fragmented approach to waste management across the state is problematic for local government and the communities we represent, in achieving sustainable environmental outcomes for waste management and resource recovery.

### ***Landfill Levy and the Sustainability Fund***

Hume has collected approximately \$14m of Landfill Levy since 2008. Since then just over \$429,000 has been returned to Hume in grant funding, despite being one of the city's fastest growing municipalities and operating both a landfill/transfer station and resource recovery centre. The balance of the Sustainability Fund at 30 June 2018 was \$511.3m<sup>1</sup>. Hume City Council has recently called on the State Government to use part of the Landfill Levy to better resource the EPA, Council and WorkSafe to better regulate the waste industry, that has thus far allowed the illegal stockpiling of chemicals to proliferate within Hume.

Council is developing its own response and actions to reducing the risk of fire and damage caused by facilities and storage places in Hume. Council believes that a proactive inspection, monitoring and compliance program is a better solution than dealing with issues of non-compliance when they become a health hazard.

The recent recycling crisis, illegal stockpiling of chemicals and related fire incidents are symptoms of the fragmented nature of waste management by the Victorian State Government, and failure of state and federal governments to provide long term solutions for waste management and resource recovery across the state and nationally.

Yours sincerely



**DOMENIC ISOLA**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE**

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<sup>1</sup> Investing in a more sustainable future, Victorian Government Sustainability Fund 2017-18 Activities Report

## Aida Baptista

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**From:** Aida Baptista  
**Sent:** Friday, 10 May 2019 4:01 PM  
**To:** recyclinginquiry@parliament.vic.gov.au  
**Cc:** Bernadette Thomas; Peter Waite  
**Subject:** Hume City Council Submission - Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management  
**Attachments:** Letter - Environment and Planning Committee - Inquiry into Waste and Recycling\_Hume Submission 10052019.pdf

**Importance:** High

<b>Tracking:</b>	<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Delivery</b>
	recyclinginquiry@parliament.vic.gov.au	
	Bernadette Thomas	Delivered: 10/05/2019 4:01 PM
	Peter Waite	Delivered: 10/05/2019 4:01 PM

Good afternoon,

Please find attached Hume City Council's Submission to the Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management for your attention. The original has been posted.

Should you have any queries in relation to the submission, please contact Council's Acting Manager Sustainable Environment and Waster, Ms Bernadette Thomas on (03) 9205 2423 or email [BernadetteT@hume.vic.gov.au](mailto:BernadetteT@hume.vic.gov.au)

Regards,

**Aida Baptista**

CEOPA



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## Aida Baptista

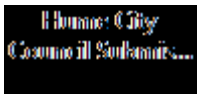
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**From:** Microsoft Outlook  
**To:** recyclinginquiry@parliament.vic.gov.au  
**Sent:** Friday, 10 May 2019 4:01 PM  
**Subject:** Relayed: Hume City Council Submission - Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management

**Delivery to these recipients or groups is complete, but no delivery notification was sent by the destination server:**

[recyclinginquiry@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:recyclinginquiry@parliament.vic.gov.au) ([recyclinginquiry@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:recyclinginquiry@parliament.vic.gov.au))

Subject: Hume City Council Submission - Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management



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**From:** recyclinginquiry <recyclinginquiry@parliament.vic.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Friday, 10 May 2019 4:01 PM  
**To:** Aida Baptista  
**Subject:** Automatic reply: Hume City Council Submission - Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management

Thank you for your interest in the Legislative Council's Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management.

If you are interested in receiving updates on the progress of this inquiry, including hearing schedules, email [news@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:news@parliament.vic.gov.au) and ask for the Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management news alerts. You may also refer to the Committee's website at <https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/epc/inquiry/954>.

All submissions made to the Committee will be made public unless confidentiality has been specifically asked for and granted by the Committee.

If your email address requires a further response we will provide it in due course.

Regards,  
The Legislative Council Environment and Planning Committee Secretariat