

D18/20900

**From** General Manager, Orange City Council

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## Council recycling programs have steady future

The Orange community can have confidence in the council-run recycling program, despite industry uncertainty triggered by international policy changes.

Orange Mayor Cr Reg Kidd said residents can continue to use their yellow recycling bins with confidence, to make sure valuable waste resources can be used profitably and kept out of landfill.

“It looks like some local councils around Australia are just waking up to some significant changes in the industry and are throwing their hands up in the air,” Cr Reg Kidd said. “As part of the western NSW NetWaste network, Orange City Council has been working through this issue since January and while there are some tough challenges ahead, it’s important the community knows some short-term solutions have already been worked out.”

### *BACKGROUND INFORMATION:*

- As part of the Netwaste network, recyclable waste is collected in Orange by contractor JRR Richards. The waste is then sorted and transported to Richard’s contractor, VISY, in Sydney. Earlier this year VISY advised its clients it could no longer accept waste.
- Under the new ‘National Sword’ policy, China has announced it will no longer accept recyclable waste from other countries which it believes is contaminated.
- After renegotiating a new contract which includes payment of an extra \$60/tonne, VISY has advised it will invest in new ways of processing waste, and it will now continue to accept waste from central west councils.
- Orange City Council and others within the NetWaste group of Councils will be making application to the Environment Protection Authority for relief funding to assist with short to longer term management of the issue. Financial support of up to \$75/tonne from this State Government relief package will be used in meeting additional processing costs; improving Council tendering processes to increase the production and use of recycled products and fund community education initiatives to reduce kerbside recycling contamination.

“The trickle-down effect is that councils now face significant new costs to continue to provide kerbside recycling to residents,” Cr Reg Kidd said.

“But, the other side of the coin with this so-called crisis is that it may be the opportunity to explore a bold new future for recycling in Australia. There are real opportunities here and with state and federal government support we could develop new regional jobs in a home-grown environmental and recycling industry.

**ORANGE CITY COUNCIL**

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# MEDIA RELEASE

“Government budgets are tight but one way forward is to ensure that the hundreds of millions of dollars in waste levies collected from NSW communities each year are fully reinvested to support recycling.

“It’s estimated that the NSW Government collected \$660 million from local councils in waste levies in the last financial year, but only 18% of that money was returned to local government.

“Along with Local Government NSW, I call on the NSW Government to dedicate more of the proceeds of the waste levy to the cause for which it was collected.

“Amongst the coverage of this crisis it’s been very interesting to see how much of the technology already exists which could prevent almost all waste going to landfill. And now is the time to invest in the infrastructure to make that happen.

“Orange has been a leader in waste management over many years. We were one of the first regional councils to introduce recycling, as well as kitchen & garden kerbside collection to build an industrial-scale compost production system. It will take some structural change at the national level but there will also be local opportunities.

“I think the next challenges to be explored offer some exciting ways forward. Orange is the place where recycled glass is brought from across the western region. Why not a manufacturing plant to produce silica as a base for roadmaking and construction? What about a power plant that uses waste to generate electrical energy?

“Perhaps the change of policy by China, and the shake-up in the local waste management industry, will turn out to be a catalyst for creating a much better waste management future. Everyone in the waste industry supports less reliance on export markets and more investment in on-shore processing options. Now is the time to invest in the infrastructure to make that happen.”

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