



ENVIRONMENT, RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

WASTE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Old Parliament House, Adelaide

Wednesday 28 August 1996 at 10.50 a.m.

(OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT)

PARLIAMENT OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

MEMBERS:

Mrs D.C. Kotz MP (Presiding Member)
Hon. M.J. Elliott MLC
Hon. T.G. Roberts MLC
Hon. C.D. Schaefer MLC
Ms A.K. Hurley MP

WITNESS:

CHERYL LEUE, Executive Member, Conservation Council of South Australia, The Conservation Centre, 120 Wakefield Street, Adelaide 5000, called and examined:

85 THE ACTING PRESIDING MEMBER (Hon. Caroline Schaefer): Thank you for appearing before this committee. I bring to your attention sections 28 and 31 of the Parliamentary Committees Act 1991 which set out the privileges, immunities and powers of this committee and the protection afforded to witnesses. Section 26 of the Parliamentary Committees Act provides that members of the public may be present during the presentation of witnesses unless the committee resolves otherwise but may not be present during the deliberations of the committee. If at any stage you wish to go off the record, the committee will consider your request and, if it agrees, no record will be taken by *Hansard*. Would you please proceed with your evidence?—I am the Executive Member for waste and pollution for the Conservation Council of South Australia. Mark Morris is from Lightboard, and he is here to assist me with this presentation. For the last just over 12 years I have been involved as a community activist against the conditions of current dumping, most specifically at Highbury but now throughout the State of South Australia. Within my portfolio, I have made it my task to ensure that whatever I can do through the Conservation Council to improve waste management standards in South Australia, I most certainly will do. I realise that normal protocol is for the committee to ask questions at the end of my evidence. I will be quite happy for you to ask questions as we go along. I think it would be better that way.

86 Very often the presentation does bring out a situation where questions are spontaneous. If you do not mind your presentation being interrupted, the committee will ask questions as you proceed?—I have started off and looked at the current state of play the way we see it from the Conservation Council of South Australia. All major stakeholders recognise Adelaide is currently experiencing a waste crisis. I think that is why you are here today. It has got to the stage now where things must change. Whereas things ought to have changed, we have now got to a 'must change' situation. We have limited landfill available at its present capacity and, within the next 18 months, we must definitely define where we are going to put our waste and how we are going to put our waste there. Current landfill conditions and proposals in the marketplace require immediate action. The closing of East Waste by refusal of the DAC to extend their landfill, and the refusal of the height extension at Wingfield has meant current landfill conditions are limited. We now have four active environmental impact

statements that are within the marketplace. We have CSR at Highbury, Inkermann, Dublin and Medlow Road. All four of those are currently active EISs and will require an answer. It cannot be left. It all has to happen now. If we are going to take our time, by that time, it will all be over. The ANZECC resolution cannot be met with current practices. It is a commitment we have made politically and socially, all the way through the authorities, that we will meet the ANZECC resolution and that resolution is to cut by 50 per cent what is going to landfill by the year 2000, using 1992 as the base, even though we did not have any baseline data to go with. However, it is very clear that current waste management practices and current or known use of our waste resource has led to a very apparent lack of ability to meet the ANZECC resolution. I do believe that in South Australia we have the opportunity to lead the way if we want to. The community demands improvements in all facets of waste management. The past two years has shown everyone that the community will not tolerate the landfill conditions that it has tolerated for the last 2 000 years—in other words, dump it as close to the city precinct as possible. That was fine 2 000 years ago when we were not a wasteful society. We are a wasteful society now and it has gone from wasteful in large waste, like whitegoods, to largely putrescible items. We are a throwaway society, including throw away foods etc.

What needs fixing? This slide was taken at Wingfield in September 1995 and this is the way we currently pile up our garbage. This entire area is not clear, but it is all putrescible garbage, open to the elements and remains so until they decide to cover it up, which is supposed to be daily but does not always happen, as we know. What does need fixing? Waste production at industry level, and I include industry and office waste. That is packaging, of what is the by-product of producing products, from offices, restaurants and the hospitality industry. All those trades are producing garbage. A lot of that is putrescible. A lot is resource we can re-use. Most of it is going to landfill where, instead of being useful, it is pollutant. We must get a consumer desire for minimal waste output. It is all very well to say, 'Educate the community.' But if we look at it realistically, education and desire are two different things. We know what the right things is, but to want to do it is a different thing. We need to have a community desire for utilising the three Rs—reduce, re-use and recycle. I am sure you have seen the McGregor report. The desire to do it, the need to do it is not there. It is a marketing exercise rather than education. Each one is as important as the other. There is a lack of a real need to change financially. At the moment it is so cheap to dispose of our landfill the way we dispose of it. Why do it any other way? We have to look at the real cost of landfill and waste disposal, not just today but generationally, as we have agreed through ANZECC.

Next is the cheap disposal of storage of waste. It is cheaper to store it when it is a problem than to deal with it and turn it into a resource. The culture has to be changed. At the moment, it is my waste, so it must be waste. I put it in the garbage bin and do not worry about it, whereas the culture should be: it is my waste, but it could be someone else's resource, so there needs to be a culture shift. There is a lack of ownership and responsibility for waste. With regard to packaging, we have seen the plastic carrier bags. No-one has responsibility to say, 'I caused that; I will take responsibility.' There is a national push for reductions in the waste industry, but that is not exactly working, so there needs to be a responsibility. At the moment, we are burying our resources. What we are doing is taking a resource, putting it into the ground and it turns into something that is a toxin. It does not seem entirely sensible to be

doing that. At the moment 7 per cent of what is going to landfill should be in it. The rest should be out of it and being re-used.

There is no marketing of property development for recycling material and waste. It is all dealt with at local and council level. We need to take an holistic approach so that we can define markets and create products. It moves from an educative system to one of marketing. The siting of landfill and waste disposal facilities must be addressed very soon. At the moment, it is wherever the proponent wants it to be, and there is no drive, either from the Government or its agency, to say where a landfill should be, and that is not catered for within the strategy. It needs to be pushed that landfills should be sited where they are going to do no social and no environmental damage. That cannot be said of any landfill or any proposed landfill at the moment.

I turn now to operational standards of servicing industries. This is probably the most appalling of all the points. At the moment, our operational standards in the waste industry are terrible. It is disgusting. They have been allowed to get away with environmental murder for far too long. Regulations can be applied. We have a very strong Act and that needs to be defined. It needs to be brought forward to industry that it must behave in a morally and environmentally responsible way.

87 THE HON. M.J. ELLIOTT: I want to go back to the three Rs and seek your reaction on one point. One of the concerns I have is where the commercial vested interests exist. There is virtually no commercial vested interest in the reduction of waste production. There is some commercial vested interest with respect to reuse, particularly marine dealers with bottles, etc., for reuse, but they are usually smaller companies. When you get to recycling, you have the bottle manufacturers and various other people who would rather see material being recycled than being reused or not manufactured in the first place. There is an increasing commercial interest as you move from reduce, to reuse, to recycle. How do we tackle that clear commercial interest, which tends to push us down to one end of the three Rs?—It needs to be attacked in two forms and the first form is through ANZECC. At the moment, through CEPA, on a national level industry is being invited to put forward scoping papers to reduce their waste, either in their packaging or in production. The majors groups, such as building and demolition, packaging, and the food industry, are all being made to put down what they can do to reduce. There is a force, which is coming through at the level of CEPA, which goes before the ANZECC Ministers in November.

We have to encourage a strength at that level. It has to be holistic and there has to be a desire from community. That desire must come from community and push on out so that industry relates back to a community desire. Industry relates very quickly to community desire, as can be seen from any type of marketing campaign. It will react very quickly to a community shift.

88 THE ACTING PRESIDING MEMBER: As to the operational standards of servicing industry, do you have some examples of what you are talking about?—Most certainly. I will take it to my own area, to Highbury, and East Waste, which operated for

25 years. To all outward appearances, it was operating very well, but residents were not having a terribly good time of it. Residents had to complain for 25 years of odours, of blowflies that were infesting their houses, and of rat infestations. None of those were applied or responded to by the operator, and it was not until the community got together as a group that the Environment Protection Authority had to go in and investigate. The community used group impact. When it did investigate, it found that East Waste had not been the good neighbour that it was supposed to have been.

Another example is Removal Rubbish, which operates out of Waterloo Corner Road. The Environment Protection Authority has strong evidence and it is currently trying to take court action against that company because it has breached the conditions of its licence numerous times, including breaching the ground water, and in that area that is an extremely dangerous thing to do, with the mangroves and primary industry close by. Removal Rubbish is still operating. When I say that operating standards are disgusting, I mean that Removal Rubbish should have been closed down and not allowed to operate until it cleans itself up.

Those regulations can be flaunted and that is where the operational standards need to be lifted. There needs to be prescriptive regulation to follow. Any industry will get away with what it can. It is human nature to do so, so those operational standards need to be lifted. At the moment, that company has been out of the public eye until the last two years, and it has not had to apply itself. Everyone sees garbage trucks going along, and that is as much as they need to know. They say, 'There is my garbage bin,' and that is that. It is time to clean up their act.

89 THE HON. M.J. ELLIOTT: Do you feel that the EPA has been doing enough monitoring of its own volition?—No.

90 Has there been a need for community pushing?—The community has to push to get action, and that applies even to monitoring that should be done as a matter of regulation. For example, at CSR, there should be monitoring of bore hole information on an annual basis. That is within the conditions, but that has not been done since 1994. Again, there needs to be far stricter policing by the Environment Protection Authority with respect to the regulations, let alone forcing those regulations and strengthening them.

91 THE HON. T.G. ROBERTS: Have you taken up with the EPA the issue of site preparation for greenfield siting, so that the site for new landfills is appropriate?—Most certainly. This is something that the Conservation Council and the community groups have been pushing from the word go. Industry is left to its own designs to select its own site, which is going to be most accessible to them and not to the community and certainly not to operating standards. At this stage, the Environment Protection Authority has not chosen or elected to strongly come out with site criteria. The Conservation Council would suggest that site criteria should be laid down prior to any proposals going into the marketplace. If there are no guidelines, a proponent can just go for his life. That is where there is a huge planning error, and that needs to be addressed.

So how do we change? Who provides clear leadership and direction? If there is no clear leadership and no direction, who knows where we are going? Who can lead? Do we have a leader in our marketplace and can the right changes be made? Let us look at the integrated waste management strategy for metropolitan Adelaide and ask ourselves some questions about whether it achieves the task that it should set out to achieve. Is the current strategy strong enough and visionary enough for the current crisis? I would have to say most certainly that it is not. When the strategy was first promoted 22 months ago, there was community consultation, and there was a huge response to it both in submissions and in the public arena at public meetings. There is enough strength coming from all parties, including political Parties, to encourage the Environment Protection Authority to come out with a strong strategy that shows clear leadership and pushes us into the twenty-first century.

However, we have a weak strategy that has no prescriptive element and it is totally reliant on where we go from here. That was fine 22 months ago, but it is not fine today. Does the strategy promote clear direction to all major stakeholders? It does not. We have a prime example with site criteria. It does not say to the proponent where sites should be. What policies are in place to enforce regulation and control? We have such policies in place, but we just do not use them. I have given the example of Removal Rubbish and I have recently had confirmation that the Borrelli site at Wingfield has broken conditions of licence, and I can supply details of those. That is known by the EPA and so far nothing has been done about it. Both that company and Removal Rubbish are operating, having breached their conditions. If I break the law I am stopped from doing so. These guys are not.

Is the strategy good enough? In one word, no. What is wrong with dumps? This is a photograph of Wingfield in 1995, and most of the birds that you see there are silver gulls. It is quite common to see them near a beach but, if you come out to Highbury where East Waste operates, we have flocks of these, flocks of Ibis, and we even have the rare pelican or three. They can grab a large amount of food in their beaks and drop it into people's gardens, onto their roofs and, therefore, into the water system. We are trying to encourage recycling of water, through the use of rainwater tanks, but none of that can be done if you live near a dump. Since East Waste closed, we do not see silver gulls or crows. We have kookaburras in the trees again and we have recorded six birds that we have not seen for some years. We are going to do a bird count to show you the effects of landfill on local flora and fauna.

What is wrong with dumps? They are all currently substandard. None in South Australia is operating to world's best practice standards. Each is substandard and each should be closed. There is a blatant flaunting of regulations at dumps. I have given you two examples and I am sure that, if we looked at the EPA books, we would find more. There is clear environmental damage. At the East Waste site, it was very clear that there is pollution to the ground water, and that can go into the Torrens. There is pollution of our air, and there is methane gas production. If there is not full gas extraction—and even that leaves a high percentage in the air—there is air pollution and other pollutants. In America, there has been some investigation into living near landfill, and the health hazards are well recorded.

Why do we turn resources into a toxic hazard? We take a resource, we bury it in the ground and we turn it into a toxin. It does not sound sensible in 1996 to do that and it does not sound sensible to be heading into the twenty-first century doing that. It inflicts negative impacts on the host communities and the local environment. Those negative impacts are well recorded, and I have recorded many of those with members living around the East Waste site. Some of them are horrific. I have seen one old couple, who have bought their retirement home there, and who have had their lives thoroughly destroyed. He is now an obsessive compulsive and she has a heart condition. That is entirely caused by the stress they have had over the years that they have been there, with the negative impacts of landfill. The other negative impacts are well recorded and, if you one want to know them, please ask.

92 THE ACTING PRESIDING MEMBER: You have been talking about the effect on the immediate residential area. Does this also have an impact because of the proximity of residences to the landfills as they are sited now?—Most certainly.

93 What about the use of buffer zones?—The EPA has suggested a minimum buffer zone between residences and landfill below ground of 200 metres, which is entirely insufficient. It has been well recorded that the environmental effects of landfill go well over the 200 metres. That is recorded by Michael Nash who wrote a paper for the RACI. Other impacts include amenity loss. If one wants to live in Highbury it is very different from one wanting to live in Wingfield. If you live in Wingfield you associate that with heavy industry and waste. In Highbury you should not have to associate it with that. The perceptive amenity of the community, the value of their homes and environment, is considerably less with a landfill than without it. No-one wants to live next to a dump, an abattoir or an industry that causes smells and other environmental hazards. It has to stop.

94 Do you have your own considered opinion in relation to buffer zones and what do you believe would be a practical distance if we are looking at continued landfill?—Landfill has to be out of the metropolitan area. Landfills are sited in prime residential areas. At Highbury it is sitting where the linear and conservation parks are sited. We need to talk about siting criteria and say where a dump should not go. If it should not be there the buffer zone should not be considered. I do not think it should be closer than 500 metres. Even then that is not going to stop the infliction of avifauna or birds. No dump in the world can control vermin.

95 THE HON. T.G. ROBERTS: Is that only for landfill rather than recycling?—There must be some investigation with recycling. There needs to be a considerable buffer zone. There is a certain amount of putrescible material within the recycling system which will cause some of the same problems as landfill in relation to vermin and odour. It needs a considerable buffer zone. It is sited at the proponent's convenience and never at the most appropriate site. The proponent has a hole or a paddock, which sounds like a good place for a dump. They do not choose the best site for a landfill and that is why the current system is totally wrong. Industry needs to be given the guidelines of where it can and cannot operate.

The Conservation Council of SA suggests that the current strategy does not seriously address the adverse effects of a dump. There is no clear direction, such as 'put it

there', 'don't do this' or, 'run it like this'. There is no vision. There are limited goal posts. The strategy does not have the vision to take it into the next century. It does not look at a clear culture change. We need to think differently about our waste.

96 THE ACTING PRESIDING MEMBER: I know you have negative aspects on the strategy and, although you have your own interpretation, it is only a strategy. It does not bring in regulations or legislation. It clearly states in the overall statement that it is not a strategy that is set in stone but is there to take into consideration any of the areas we consider are necessary and can be looked at in either a regulatory or legislative program. It is a guideline?—I take it as a guideline, but two months ago it would have been sufficient as a guideline but now it is a bit late for guidelines. We have marketplace decisions that have to be made in the next few months and if we only have guidelines which are not firm, I cannot see that the strategy will be able to do its job.

97 Hopefully this committee will be able to cover this area?—Fantastic. What does the community expect? The next picture shows half a pig's head found by two residents walking with their grandchildren only metres from their home. We do not know whether a truck dropped it. It may have been dropped by a bird. That is an example of the sort of impact that a resident has to cope with if they live next to a landfill.

98 Is this because the management of the current dumps are not complying with the conditions of their licence such as the cover that is part of those conditions?—That is right. The next picture was taken on 21 July and it was a wet week. Because East Waste was so ill-sited, when it rains as heavily as it has done this winter, nobody can get in to cover the waste, so it is very open to vermin to get in and take away rubbish to their lairs. It is not nice for families to come across.

Any future strategy must protect all the community from the impact of waste management. There should not be any sacrificial lamb. If one family is suffering it is one family too many. Any future strategy should protect all South Australians as every family has that right. The community has an expectation of leadership and a clearly defined leader must be established. Whether it is the EPA, the Government or this committee, someone has to say which way we must go. The waste industry must be accountable. Currently the waste industry is not accountable.

99 THE HON. M.J. ELLIOTT: Do you have a view as to whether or not the EPA is failing to fulfil its obligations due to lack of resourcing, lack of will or some combination of the two?—I do not think it is a lack of will as many of them are very dedicated. Most certainly it is under resourced financially and humanly. I do not know that it sees itself as the leader and we have to have clear leadership. Accountability is not being enforced anywhere along the line. The EPA has shown some strong direction, particularly in the Wingfield and East Waste decisions. However, it needs to be total. Every decision must be strong and we have an Act that can make that industry accountable. I cite Borelli Brothers and Remove All Rubbish, both of which have blatantly flouted regulations and are not made accountable. Neither has been closed or stopped from operating nor been penalised.

100 THE HON. T.G. ROBERTS: Does the CCSA have a policy on compensation for citizens or residents who are affected?—Each sector of the waste industry should be able to fund any environmental or social compensation. However, industry currently puts its own connotations on that. CSR says that it will have a fund out of Highbury but it will be for only major impacts. We would strengthen that accountability so that it is similar to the ERF funding for mining. There is a kitty there. That needs to be a very strong kitty and needs to be enough to encourage the industry to do the right thing to ensure that there is not the damage in the first place.

101 Is it a general State fund?—A State fund should be able to be accessed but each sector of the industry must be accountable for its own environmental or social debt. At the time of agreement there must be an education that they will completely cover any costs that may be incurred through damage environmentally and/or socially. It must be made clear that if one does this one will be penalised.

102 That includes siting and operation?—Yes. Does the strategy protect? No, it does not. Using the strategy as it stands, the CSR site could be considered. In New South Wales any one of many site conditions would preclude this site from dumping. This slide shows the Highbury site and shows hills face. They intend to dump in hills face. It shows the city of Adelaide, the linear park and the Torrens River. It is in a catchment area, close to housing and is a scenic area. In New South Wales that would be precluded from being considered as a site. Its regulations have been in place for some time. We have gone our own way and have not been strong in what we have done. The community feels unprotected and at high risk. We are not protected by the strategy or the current regulations. We feel at risk and feel very vulnerable.

The conclusion on the waste strategy is that it is weak and will not do the job. The EPA must show clear and continual leadership and direction. I congratulate it on the ACC and East Waste decisions as both are a good start. The action plan for the future must be enacted and a clear vision defined. Culture must change for a change to be effected. It is all very well to say that this is what we should do, but we must change our culture. We have to learn from and listen to the community and at the end of the day take it on board. The Conservation Council of South Australia promotes an holistic approach to future waste management strategy and policy. As we are part of our environment, so our waste is part of us: it is our responsibility. This sums up exactly what we have to do. Cradle to grave responsibility and intergenerational equity are powerful words. They are worthy of being the absolute cornerstones for future direction. I encourage this committee to consider that last statement. It will give you the cornerstone of wherever you want to work to from here.

103 THE ACTING PRESIDING MEMBER: Earlier you said that we have a strong Act, that the regulations are in place and that we have to change our culture. How do you suggest, allowing for the fact that there is already a strong Act in place, that we change our culture?—The culture itself is a culture shift for every section of major stakeholders. It must be a culture change for the community and it must support that Act. We do not bring in the

strength of the Act because the community does not have to apply itself to it. It needs to be a culture change so that everyone is moving in the same direction, putting out the absolute minimum of waste, prepared to pay for the responsibility of the waste they produce and prepared to pay for any action that is a negative impact. We have to shift that culture change. I mean it as a holistic approach.

104 Do we do it with advertising or education?—Everybody knows. Everyone is educated enough. If you ask anyone they know the three Rs, know that they are suppose to recycle. It is the desire to change. I see it as a shift from educating the community to marketing our new product to the community. Look at it as a product. New waste management should be a product rather than a system. We create a desire out there in the wider community and, yes, most certainly we use advertising. As you may know, advertising is my background and I see the strength of it. I do not see the strength coming from an educative process but from a marketing process, so that we are marketing our product to people and creating a desire for them to want that product.

105 How strong should that be? We should enforce that desire, in your opinion? Should we fine people if they do not recycle, for instance?—I think that is very hard to inflict, because that immediately makes people feel negative towards it, rather than encouraging that desire. Initially, we need to promote that desire in a positive way. There needs to be regulation in place and there most certainly is regulation that can be used to encourage people to do the right thing. Rather than fine them for doing the wrong thing, we should give them an incentive for doing the right thing, so their rates will reflect that, for example. Waste costs very little at the moment: I think it is \$37 per ratepayer per year, which is not a great deal. There needs to be an encouragement for them to do the right thing and for them to know that if they do not do the right thing they will pay more. I do not see it as a penalising situation.

106 THE HON. T.G. ROBERTS: Do you put rehabilitation in the same category as recycling and waste management? Does there need to be education and marketing of rehabilitation of dump sites?—Yes.

107 Can you separate out the two strategies?—We have not only sites to be rehabilitated but a also lot of orphan sites throughout Adelaide that people are discovering, very much as they did in a residential area in Queensland, when people built their homes in Albert Shire and did not know they were on top of a toxic dump until black seepage started coming through. We need to see that social rehabilitation is carried out in a environmentally responsible manner. That is being done; industry is starting to come through, and that can be encouraged. John Falzon has just started a company that is there to rehabilitate old sites. Nobody wants them. The council does not want them. East Waste and Pacific Waste, for example, have tried to give them to the Tea Tree Gully council. Why would the council want to take on those problems? The community does not want them. So, we have all the sites that the community does not want. If we are to use primary residential areas we have to look at the responsibility of the site owners and site operators to rehabilitate those sites to an agreed standard.

108 MS HURLEY: On the subject of rewarding people for recycling, you were speaking about the low cost at present. Open landfill will be a problem, because if we are really to site landfills where they are appropriate, away from metropolitan areas, it will cost more in transport and in the operation of those dumps. So, even though you might make some money from recycling, my suspicion is that the net cost will still be higher. I suspect that is one thing the committee will have to grapple with. Where do you believe this cost should be made up from: local government, State Government, Federal Government or individuals?—I think individuals have to pay through all of those sectors for the real cost of landfill. At the moment, landfill is cheaper here by almost 50 per cent than in New South Wales. We are not paying the real price of landfill. If you like, we have a credit—a sort of bank card—on landfills at the moment, and the debt is mounting up. We have to decide whether we will charge the right price today or leave it to our sons and daughters and their children to pay. Do we build up that credit or pay what we should be paying now?

109 Do you see that as being paid through increased rates, increased taxes coming through the Federal system or a State levy?—At the moment, waste collection is under the jurisdiction of the local municipalities. That could be a culture change, and one that you consider. It could be a State levy through taxes. Yes; I think that landfill prices will go up and that the cost of disposing of our garbage will go up. The Environment Protection Authority predicts that and we predict that. If we are going to improve our product we must improve, and pay the price for it. You do not go to the butcher and get topside instead of scrag end if you pay the cheap price. We have to decide whether our industry will be scrag end or whether we will pay for topside.

110 THE HON. M.J. ELLIOTT: Your submission has focused very strongly on the issue of dumping, and I understand that that has been the issue you have been most closely associated with. Would the Conservation Council like to come back to address a couple of other issues, particularly container deposit laws and recycling—which is one way of reducing things coming into a dump—and perhaps even waste generation? I make that invitation because there are issues on which we would need a contribution from the Conservation Council?—Certainly. I was under the impression that today was a preliminary hearing and that I would be coming back. I wanted to deal today with the major issues on which we need to focus and which are the immediate crisis. All those other components are equally important, and I look forward to having the opportunity to discuss those.

111 Yes; when we were discussing it we knew it was short notice. You said that the Act is strong enough. I wonder if I could put to you that perhaps the Act is strong enough in relation to dumps and the capacity of the Government or EPA to regulate dumps. When we get into the questions of reducing and re-using, we find that very little legislation addresses those two aspects other than perhaps container deposit legislation, of which I am aware the conservation movement is very critical, because of the inconsistencies within it. I ask you to react to that; perhaps it could be covered in a later submission. For instance, I am aware that in Europe deposits are used not only in relation to recovery of glass and metal, but also to ensure that mercury batteries do not go into landfill?—We need to look at legislative changes. We have that Act to administer the six Acts; they have all been brought into one Act. That does

not mean there cannot be legislative changes to cover other areas. I think that that is one thing that this committee has to consider; it must consider legislative change very strongly. We have the Act, and if that is not doing the whole job there has to be legislative change.

112 THE ACTING PRESIDING MEMBER: Is there a precedent in other States for stronger legislation?—Yes.

113 How does our waste management legislation compare with other States?—New South Wales probably has the best legislation, and that was only enacted earlier this year. I would say it is more prescriptive in its strategy, but its criteria work far better. For example, I previously mentioned the siting criteria. This strategy does not have siting criteria. It does not provide where you cannot put a dump, whereas in New South Wales there are various site criteria so that, if they cannot be met, the site is not even considered. I would say that you should look to New South Wales and, rather than looking to do as good a job as New South Wales, go one better. It has very strong legislation in place, and I would say it is an Australian leader. I would also say that you should look to the European and Canadian standards. If the committee would like, I will supply you with some information on the European Community and Canada, which both have some excellent legislation in place.

114 Could you suggest examples of dumps—preferably within South Australia and certainly within Australia—which at least go close to meeting the criteria?—Yes: there is one in New South Wales and one in Brisbane. I can supply you with the environmental impact statement for the New South Wales one, Seven Hills, which shows very clearly that it is as close to best practice as Australia knows how to get.

115 Do we have anything in South Australia that is coming to close to that?—No.

116 THE HON. M.J. ELLIOTT: If we compared Australian waste management with that in Europe or even New South Wales, would it still be true to say that we still have much of more of a focus on putting it into the ground, whereas in Europe recovery is much greater?—In Europe they do not have the land space. At the moment we believe that we have untold land space that we can use. We think of it as an unlimited resource that is at our disposal (if you will excuse the pun). In America, they are mining old dumps for the resources in them and refilling them, so they are re-using their dumps to the extreme and are having to look at alternatives to landfill. Nowhere in the world has the answer, but most certainly we are way behind, because we think we have the resources just to continue.

117 THE ACTING PRESIDING MEMBER: Thank you very much for your very interesting submission. We look forward to hearing you in greater detail at another time.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW

THE COMMITTEE ADJOURNED