

GIPPSLAND CONTINUES RECYCLING

A strong message of *'continue to recycle'* came from Gippsland's local councils and from the Gippsland Waste and Resource Recovery Group throughout February and continues to be the focus in March.

According to Cr Dick Ellis Chair of the Gippsland Waste and Resource Recovery Group, Gippsland households have a great record when it comes to recycling.

"Across Gippsland, approximately 25,000 tonnes of recyclables is collected from kerbside. This equates to around 200 kg per household. Since 2001, the total amount of recyclable household material has increased by 70 per cent.

This positive track record and the hard work of Councils and those in the industry has enabled recycling services to continue throughout the region.

"While alternative arrangements to address the challenges facing the recycling industry are identified, it is crucial that Gippslanders maintain the great recycling behaviours they've built over the years."

In February the Victorian Government announced a \$12 million assistance package to help councils respond to shifts in global markets. This temporary funding is available to all Victorian councils in the form of a grant to support the recycling services supply chain and assist in the reset of contract pricing arrangements to better reflect market conditions and risk management.

An additional \$1 million will be made available to industry to fast track new infrastructure to improve the quality of recovered paper, cardboard and plastics.

While China has not completely banned the import of all recycled plastic and paper, they now require a cleaner, more processed version of these materials. The Victorian recycling industry is already taking steps to upgrade infrastructure and systems so it can meet those standards, however this process will take time.

"Government assistance to Councils via a grants process will provide temporary relief to Councils, covering a portion of any price rise associated with the continued collection and processing of kerbside recycling for the period of 1 March to 30 June 2018," Cr Ellis explained.

In the meantime, the Gippsland Waste and Resource Recovery Group is working alongside Gippsland's six Councils as they apply for the temporary grant and tailor plans to meet any increase in recycling costs post 1 July 2018.

"The estimated additional cost for processing (comingled) recycled product ranges between \$15-30 per household," added Cr Ellis. "The actual price borne by Councils during this grant period and revised pricing arrangements for future budgets are being carefully determined by each individual Council."

Validated predictions for the amounts of recyclables collected over the four-month period will form an agreed cap, with 50 per cent paid to Councils around 30 April 2018 and the final payment made once reported actual tonnage has been verified by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning by the end of September.

“There are challenges and opportunities when it comes to recycling in Gippsland,” acknowledged Cr Ellis.
“The GWRRG and local government are committed to continue recycling in ways to benefit local communities, the environment and the local economy.”

- END -

For further information or comment, please contact:

Matthew Peake
GWRRG Executive Officer
03 5633 2744