

If we are to be clean and green, we must be responsible with our waste

Imagine a Tasmania with no waste management.

Imagine if our fresh, clean air was consumed by the horrible stench of rubbish littered along our streets, causing harm to not only the environment but our own health and wellbeing.

As Tasmania's economy grows, it is essential to have adequate waste management facilities and ensure that practices are continually being improved to maintain a high standard, because if Tasmania is to retain its image as a clean and green state, we need to be responsible with our waste.

Tasmania is currently the only state without a controlled waste disposal cell. Controlled waste is waste that could be hazardous to human health or the environment if it is not managed carefully. The C cell is an individual landfill cell designed specifically to store controlled waste to ensure there is no harm to the environment.

As part of this process over the next 12 months, a controlled waste disposal cell (C cell) is being developed adjacent to the existing Copping landfill site. As the C cell site is not within the footprint of the current landfill site, it requires its own permit to operate.

C cells have the added benefit of being able to recover and reuse the resources as they become more scarce, or as technology changes.

Currently, contaminated waste produced in Tasmania is either exported interstate (to someone else's backyard) or simply stockpiled in various sites around Tasmania. Tasmania has a responsibility to address this issue now to avoid damaging the environment in the future.

The Copping C cell waste storage facility is the best and most robustly designed C cell in Australia to date.

The cell will complement the Tasmanian Waste and Resource Management Strategy objectives of waste minimisation and management of residual wastes, and has been approved by the Environment Protection Authority, which is an independent body established by Parliament to assess environmental impacts and protect our environment.

The Copping C cell will operate under strict terms and permits. Under the terms of the permit, no liquid waste will be accepted or placed into the controlled waste facility.

Materials that will be accepted include solids and spadeable sludges, such as contaminated soil, solid paint waste, building materials and industrial residues.

The waste is not toxic or radioactive and all waste will require prior approval from the Environment Protection Authority before it is accepted into the facility.

The Copping C cell development does not pose a threat to the environment or the surrounding community. In fact, not building a C cell poses a larger environmental risk. Quite simply, we cannot afford to do nothing.

The spread of misinformation by some groups and the use of emotive terminology, such as 'toxic', in the media has unfortunately resulted in negative feedback and generated unnecessary fear amongst some.

The facts are that the Copping C cell will operate under the strict supervision of the Environment Protection Authority, an enduring trust fund will be created to ensure it is protected in perpetuity and the site will not accept any forms of toxic or radioactive waste and the C cell will run to world best practice, ensuring the site does not pose a threat to the environment.

Tasmania's reputation as an environmentally friendly state and a forward-thinker in sustainability is important to its prosperity and future growth. As a state, we took the lead nationally with the removal of non-biodegradable plastic bags and it is vital that other environmental initiatives such as the Copping C cell proceed as a means of creating a strong economy as well as a cleaner, greener Tasmania.

620 words

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