

27 June 2018

MEDIA RELEASE

Solid Waste Levy Rise Should Fund Local Waste Initiatives, says Mid Murray Council

Following a significant hike in the landfill levy Councils pay to the Environmental Protection Authority, Mid Murray Council will call on the State Government to utilise a significant existing funding pool for localised waste initiatives.

Every tonne of waste destined for landfill attracts the Solid Waste Levy, which is set and imposed by the State Government, collected by Councils and paid to the EPA.

Regional Councils currently pay levy costs of \$43.50 per tonne but the rate is set to rise by 13 per cent, to \$50 per tonne for the 2018/19 financial year.

With the majority of the levy going into the Green Industry Fund, which aims to direct money back into waste initiatives and recycling projects, Council's Chief Executive Officer Russell Peate says the funds are not flowing through to Councils.

"There is currently around \$100million that has been collected through the Solid Waste Levy in the Green Industry Fund and this is expected to increase by an additional \$34million next year," he says.

"As Councils bear a 13 per cent rate rise, it would be good to see some of that funding channelled back to Councils to be put towards local waste initiatives and projects.

"Just a small fraction of those funds could have a huge impact in the Mid Murray region and help us to find solutions for looming issues.

"Councils across Australia are currently facing skyrocketing recycling costs, following China's ban on importing materials, and those funds could be put to good use."

Mr Peate says Council will write to the State Government, local MPs and the Murraylands and Riverland Local Government Association to highlight the situation and put forward Council's viewpoint.

"Continued levy increases have impacted and will continue to impact Council," he says.

"In 2017, Council had to raise waste transfer station costs to accommodate two rises in 2016 and Council is working hard to ensure this year's increase will not impact the community.

"Council is calling on the State Government to release those funds for the benefit of the Mid Murray community and for that of the entire State."

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