

## **IPART Submission – Review of Domestic Waste Management Charge**

Maitland City Council has several concerns in relation to the proposed methods discussed in the Review of Domestic Waste Management Charges Draft Report 13 December 2021. These approaches are considerably different to the approach previously discussed with Councils through the initial discussion paper and consultation sessions.

In addition to the comments and concerns raised via the submission from the Hunter Joint Organisation Maitland City Council would like to raise the following concerns with the approach discussed in the draft report.

### ***1. Do you think our proposed annual 'benchmark' waste peg will assist councils in setting their DWM charges?***

Maitland City Council currently sets their Domestic Waste Management Charge using a reasonable cost calculation approach. The annual 'benchmark' waste peg will not assist in this calculation process and will potentially hinder Council's ability to provide waste services expected by the community and effectively work to reach the state government targets stipulated in the Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy.

While the proposal indicates the approach will be a 'benchmark' waste peg to inform Councils, we are concerned with the lack of clarity if the peg is exceeded. Maitland City Council proposes to increase the DWMC by approximately 1% for 2022/23 compared to the previous financial year. With significant changes to the service over the next two to three financial years including the introduction of FOGO, a bulky waste kerbside collection and upgrades at our waste management facility it is anticipated that increases over the following financial years will be much greater.

### ***2. Do you think the pricing principles will assist councils to set DWM charges to achieve best value for ratepayers?***

One of the main issues with the pricing principles is in relation to the definitions of waste and domestic waste services. It should be appropriate for the DWMC to be used for any services that improve the effectiveness and therefore cost effectiveness of domestic waste services.

Examples include waste avoidance, reuse and problem waste education and programs. Encouraging residents to reduce waste ensure the cost of services can be reduced. Ensuring problem and hazardous waste doesn't inappropriately enter the waste management system ensures environmental impacts are reduced without the need for additional intervention and associated costs at landfills, recycling and organics processing facilities.

The exclusion of illegal dumping, which is generally domestic waste that has been inappropriately disposed of, will also greatly impact Council's ability to clean up and provide programs to reduce illegal dumping. Maitland City Council recommends programs dealing with the illegal dumping of domestic waste be included in the definition of domestic waste services.

The required approach under pricing principal 4 of obtaining finance for capital costs and recouping subsequent to implementation is likely to result in increased costs for residents which is contrary to the purpose of this review.

### ***3. Would it be helpful to councils if further detailed examples were developed to include in the Office of Local Government's Council Rating and Revenue Raising Manual to assist in implementing the pricing principles?***

Additional detailed examples would assist in implementing the pricing principles, however these examples would have been useful as part of the review and consultation process. IPART is asking Council to consider their proposed approach which lacks detail and clarity.