

Landfill dispute still not buried

Armidale-Dumaresq Council Mayor, Brian Chetwynd, has responded angrily to the "scaremongering" tactics of the Gara Valley Environment Preservation Association (GVEPA) who have pursued a vigorous campaign against the council claiming that plans to construct a landfill site on Waterfall Way will create an environmental risk to the nearby Oxley Wild Rivers National Park.

Cr Chetwynd completely rejected any assertion that the Council have been employing delaying tactics rather than undertaking investigations into alternative waste technologies.

The GVEPA believes that if the investigations reveal that alternative technologies are not affordable, Council will have only limited time to select an appropriate landfill site.

GVEPA members are concerned that delays in the investigation of alternative waste management processes will make the selection of the Waterfall Way site more inevitable because not enough time will be available to explore alternative sites.

GVEPA President, John Hamel, believes Council must see the 'big picture' and take the lead in involving all the local councils of the

area in dealing with waste management and look towards regional solutions to the problem.

"Council's failure to get the fact-finding tour underway can only lead one to question whether Council is actually serious about using alternative waste treatment technologies," said Mr Hamel.

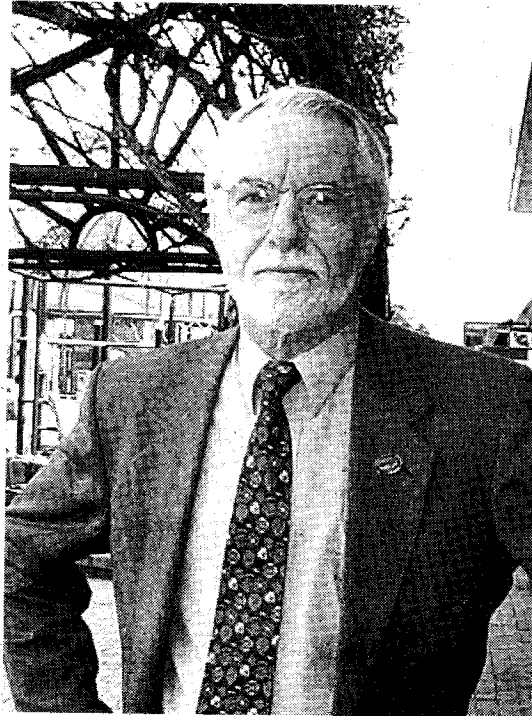
Mayor Chetwynd has been urged to abandon the current site by GVEPA, but he insists that the selection of the Waterfall Way site (Site 7) is still negotiable and that Site 7 is not even the subject of a concrete proposal.

"It needs to be made clear that we are not spending any money on Site 7 at the present time.

However, some confusion has been created by Cr Herman Beyersdorf, a member of the Council's Waste Management Committee, who in a letter to *The Independent* stated that "whether we like it or not, the site (Site 7) is now a selected site, subject only to compliance with required standards in an Environmental Impact Statement".

Cr Chetwynd appeared more reserved in his judgement of the situation saying that "it was too early to tell".

"We are undergoing a



Mayor Brian Chetwynd.

very detailed study to determine the best available strategy for waste management and we cannot make any concrete decisions until this has been done.

"We have been saying for some time now that our priority is to investigate alternative technologies and a formal resolution by council has been made to that effect.

"Since September two Councillors have been to two waste management seminars and we have contacted two of the major players in waste management and they have visited Armidale to present informa-

tion to us.

"We are in communication with a number of local councils including Grafton, Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie, Port Stephens, Cessnock and Fairfield and we will visit specific locations in the near future".

Mr Hamel has also raised questions about whether a new waste facility is actually required in Armidale.

"This is simply not realistic," said Cr Chetwynd.

"We have already extended the life of the present site until 2008 but we can't go on using it forever."