

Mayor responds to landfill anxiety

Armidale Dumaresq Council's Mayor, Brian Chetwynd, has responded to growing unrest regarding the possible environmental impact of the proposed landfill site on Waterfall Way by claiming that council has plans to reduce the volume of waste to its new landfill site by 80 per cent over the next decade.

"Our ultimate aim is zero landfill and the way things are going that will be achievable," he said.

"Household recycling has increased by 50 per cent in the last four years and industrial waste is being recycled at similar rates.

"We have achieved the best recycling record of any council in

the State in our division and the momentum is increasing."

Cr Chetwynd said tenders had been called for hydrological and geological testing of the proposed landfill site 12kms east of Armidale on Waterfall Way as the first stage of an extensive environmental impact study.

If the site meets the required criteria in these areas further environmental studies would be conducted.

"No final decision will be made until all these assessments have been concluded," he said.

"The State guidelines are very strict and there is no way Council would sign off on any

site that allowed leakage into the surrounding environment, including rivers and national parks."

Cr Chetwynd said the search for a new landfill site had continued for more than 10 years with the clock ticking towards the closure of the current site on Long Swamp Road within two years.

A local Community Consultative Committee including representation from several environmental groups had selected the proposed new site on the basis of 32 environmental and social criteria addressed in the Maunsell Report commissioned by Council.

"The process has

been exhaustive and transparent and is ongoing," Cr Chetwynd said. "There are still many opportunities for people in the local community to make submissions and raise concerns in the lengthy environment assessment process."

The Mayor said that the push to reduce landfill would have a big impact on any new site. There would be much less traffic to the site as all domestic, industrial and other waste would be delivered to the current Waste Transfer Station for recycling.

Producing landscaping and management plans for the site were all included in the current tender process, he said.