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Garbage saga

I appreciate that in the ongoing saga of where to put our garbage, Council has investigated the "Bedminster Composting process" and rejected it on the basis that it "was not competitive with landfill at present". However, it was also minuted that "However, if in the future the technology improves and costs are commensurately reduced, we should be prepared to keep composting processes under continual review." Armidale Dumaresq Council Minutes, page 11/2002, Ordinary Meeting 21 October 2002

We don't have to go very far to see promising improvements in the technology; not a total elimination, but about 75 per cent of the total waste stream being diverted. All of Fairfield City Council's household garbage is handled by the Urban resource - Reduction, Recovery and Recycling (UR-3R) Facility at Eastern Creek in Western Sydney; Macarthur Resource Recovery Park services about 100,000 households in Camden, Campbelltown, Wollondilly and Wingecarribee. These facilities do have large capacities compared to our needs: Eastern Creek at an initial 175,000 tonnes each year, compared to our 15,500 for Armidale Dumaresq LGA plus Guyra LGA. Perhaps this could become a project for the New England Strategic Alliance of Council? Waste could be moved over rail from other communities outside NESAC in order to increase the scale of the project. Add 70,000 tonnes from Tamworth Regional Council alone and we are somewhat closer to a practical scale.

The benefits of these new systems are claimed to be: reduce greenhouse gas emissions, recover recyclables from the waste stream, and reduce leachate in the landfill and produce compost. Both facilities are self sufficient in water and power, and also send some power to the grid. These systems generate power from combustion of bio-gas, with higher capture rates than bioreactor landfills.

Of course, these are matters which should be considered carefully; but considered they should.

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