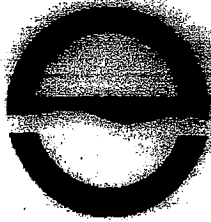


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## Canberra Environment Centre

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24-2-2005

Dear Allan,

Thank you for your fax concerning the material offered by John Ahern in support of Cork's proposed incinerator program.

Officers of the Australian Capital Territory Government inform me that they did not in fact have a meeting with Mr Ahern in regard to their strategy.

Mr Ahern while in the ACT met with officers of the Federal Government who have no responsibility for waste management in the Nation's capital. The only meeting at which Mr Ahern was present which ACT officers attended was a round table, where ACT officers asked Mr Ahern several questions.

The concept of Zero Waste was not founded in Canberra. It started with a groups in the US and New Zealand. The title of the Canberra communities strategy is "No Waste by 2010" not zero waste. The inference that opponents to incineration in Australia have changed the concept to "Zero Waste" is incorrect.

Australia and New Zealand have no incineration as it is regarded as dangerous and backward. The last attempt to establish an incinerator in New South Wales in 1989 caused mass public demonstrations.

It is recognised by all Zero Waste groups around the world that a long-term goal of Zero Waste would indeed require redesign of a large number of products.

Any community experiencing an increase in economic development will see an increase in waste, this is not peculiar to Canberra, it has happened in all parts of the world. The population in both Canberra and the adjoining City of Queanbeyan, which disposes of its waste in Canberra have been increasing at between 1 % and 3% over the past 10 years.

Canberra households are increasing at 2% per annum with an increase in single person homes.

It is estimated that waste production in the ACT increases at a rate of 10% per annum. If the ACT did not have its focus on the "No Waste by 2010" strategy and its comprehensive recycling programs the total waste to landfill would have risen from 237,981 in 1996/97 to 561,000 in 2005.

The latest figure for waste to landfill in Canberra is in fact 208,390.

In the process of achieving its exceptional recycling success the ACT has generated an estimated at 250 jobs. The majority of these jobs are in small business. At a low-income wage of \$40,000, the total value of wages for recycling jobs in Canberra is \$10,000,000.

Flow on effects to service industries in the community X 3 = \$30,000,000, plus resources recovered and sold \$20,000,000. Add landfill space saved @ a low \$10 per cubic metre = another \$5,000,000

The ACT only invests around \$5,000,000 in recycling each year. For a \$5 million investment in recycling the community gets a \$55million return. Recycling and resource recovery makes sound economic sense.

In addition to the current situation, there is still another five years to go before the target date. Residual mixed waste treatment technology currently under trial in Eastern Creek Landfill in Sydney will make it possible for the ACT to reduce its waste to landfill to around 5% - and none of it will be burnt in an incinerator.

Everything about the "No Waste" Strategy is positive.

Everything about incineration is negative.

There is no incineration technology anywhere in the world that can guarantee a dioxin free burn. Background levels of dioxin can be achieved by the latest Japanese incineration technology, but at a very high price.

A report produced by Area 9 of the US EPA states that incineration causes an increase in cancer in the local population of between 1 in 100 and 1 in 1000.

In a city of 1,000,000 this is an additional 10,000 cancers per year. Assuming 10% become terminal, 1000 additional deaths at a conservative treatment cost of \$200,000 each gives an additional cost of the incinerator to the community of \$200 million.

All of the material Mr. Ahern wishes to set fire to in his incinerator is organic in origin and can be easily recycled under existing programs already in use in Canberra.

A few other points in regard to incinerators:

- The Irish have the lowest level of dioxin in their dairy milk in the world, second only to New Zealand the Irish farmer's greatest competitor. Incineration is a threat to the Irish dairy farmer. New Zealand has no incinerators.
- Incinerators do not make profits from selling energy, they make profits from gate fees.
- If you install an incinerator it will destroy your recycling markets because you have to 'feed' the thing for the next 25 years.
- When a recycling program inevitably starts in the future, the community will have to pay for both the recycling program as well as the incinerator.
- Incinerators destroy resources and remove jobs from the local community.

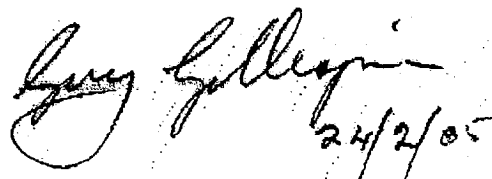
In a review of recycling programs in the US for the National Recycling Coalition, R.W. Beck found that the estimated income of the landfill and incineration industries combined was only \$40 billion per year.

The recycling industries had a payroll of \$36 billion and a combined total income of \$236 billion per year. This means that recycling is six times larger than the waste industries.

The future lies with the positive benefits of recycling, redesign and Zero Waste not the destruction, ill health and negativity put forward by the incineration dinosaur.

Regards,

Gerry Gillespie  
President

  
24/2/05