

# Inside Waste

## ALOA makes clear its position on climate change policy

Tuesday, 26 October 2010

**The Australian Landfill Owners Association (ALOA) has released a statement on its position in regard to climate change, the centrepiece of which is a regulatory scheme which would apply to putrescible landfills receiving more than 40,000 tonnes of waste per annum or having over 400,000 tonnes of waste in place. ALOA's Max Spedding said this position would take in more landfills than a national carbon scheme and would address problems with the current greenhouse reporting methodology.**

Although current emissions from landfills are less than 2.0% of Australia's total greenhouse gas emissions, ALOA says that there is capacity for increased emission reductions in the sector.

What triggered ALOA's position statement was the call in the National Waste Policy for a nation-wide position on the collection of landfill gas and also the industry's need for certainty in relation to climate change policy.

"If we are regulated we will get a more immediate reduction in greenhouse gas reductions than if we waited for a national carbon scheme," said Spedding.

"Under the CPRS we were looking down the barrel of \$20 a tonne in cost increases, but if we roll out a scheme we'll have the environmental benefit for substantially less...it should be less than \$10 a tonne".

ALOA's scheme would pick up around 100 sites around the country including a large group of government-run landfills.

The industry body believes that landfill gas emissions can best be reduced by introducing uniform regulation mandating gas collection and flaring from putrescible landfills receiving over 40,000 tonnes of waste per annum or having over 400,000 tonnes of waste in place.

It believes this is the most immediate and lowest cost approach to reducing emissions by 20% by 2020.

"It was interesting that when we had the discussion last week in Canberra, the remark was made that we were the first industry sector that had come along with an alternative," said Spedding.

The position statement also said that Australia's response to climate change should recognise that "currently there are no methods available that accurately estimate the annual volume of methane generated from an individual landfill."

This factor, according to ALOA, means any market or tax response to climate change should initially focus on reducing the use of fossil fuel based emissions.

Rather than passing the buck to the mining and energy generation sectors, Spedding said it made sense for the government to focus on what emissions can be measured accurately.

"When you're dealing with landfill gas you're dealing with a biological process that has to be modelled...and has up to 50 to 100% error factor.

"It's important that the government gives us a signal," said Spedding, "and puts a price on carbon...because we're buying trucks and equipment that will be in service for 15 years and we need to know how important the price of carbon will be."

"And if you put a price on carbon you can also put a value on your offsets," he said.

### **ALOA Position - Responding to Climate Change**

1. ALOA supports initiatives for Australia to develop and implement an early response to climate change.
2. When developing this response ALOA calls for recognition that:
  - Waste already deposited in landfills (legacy waste) should be exempt from any future climate change response,

- Currently there are no methods available that accurately estimate the annual volume of methane generated from an individual landfill,
  - Landfill gas is currently collected from sites throughout Australia but there is capacity for increased emission reduction,
  - Landfill gas is a low cost renewable energy source that can be utilised for heating or electricity generation,
  - Current emissions from landfills are less than 2.0% of Australia's total GHG emissions.
3. ALOA believes that landfill gas emissions can best be reduced by introducing uniform regulation mandating gas collection and flaring from putrescible landfills receiving over 40,000 tonnes of waste per annum or having over 400,000 tonnes of waste in place.
4. As a consequence of the above ALOA believes that the introduction of uniform regulations (rather than coverage by a market based or tax regime) offers the most immediate and lowest cost approach to reduce emissions by 20% by 2020.
5. ALOA believes that any market or tax response to climate change should initially focus on reducing the use of fossil fuel based emissions.