

## FROM THE COAST

### Talking Rubbish

Local Governments are often accused of talking rubbish and I will be the first to admit that we certainly have been in Esperance! We've had no better reason though as Esperance's current landfill is nearing capacity with operations set to cease in 2019. This is why establishing a new Waste Management Facility is top of our community's list of needs.

With nobody wanting a waste facility next to them, understandably people want to know where it will be. Thirteen sites were suggested by the community and after assessing them on a long list of criteria, the three highest scoring sites were selected for further physical testing on the potential impacts on water, soil, flora and fauna. The physical testing can't be done on all three at once to avoid wasting money if the first site meets the stringent criteria needed for approval. If the preferred site doesn't meet with criteria or approval by environmental agencies, investigations will begin again at the second site, and so on.

We need to make sure there is no negative impact on the environment so before any significant works commence the Department of Environmental Regulation will need to approve the Shire's proposal for the site. The DER's requirements for a waste facility are extremely tight, and will not approve a facility where operations have any impact to the environment.

The new facility is not a tip. It will be a state of the art, modern Waste Management Facility built to a much higher standard and be further away from housing than the current facility in Wylie Bay. Screening will be built around the facility so the casual observer will not even know there is a waste facility there at all!

So where do we go from here? Well, the preferred site is under due diligence which is why we can't identify the exact location of this or the other two sites. Local governments are required to be open and accountable but sometimes information needs to be confidential in the best interest of the community. Revealing exact locations at this stage could compromise the cost and acquisition of land for a facility which is vital to the Esperance community. We will have some more answers about the first site within the next couple of months after the first stage of the scientific assessment is completed.

We will continue to keep the community informed and updated any way we can without compromising the project. If you are particularly interested in being a part of the process in establishing our new waste facility, you may want to nominate for a working group which will soon be formed. Terms of Reference are currently being developed by Shire staff and advertising will begin inviting community members and environmental group representatives to be a part of the community reference group.