

Councillor Column

By Councillor Lara McIntyre

War on Waste. Everybody is talking about ABC's three- part documentary about Australia's growing waste problem and I guarantee, Australia wide, Councils couldn't be happier. Waste is one of the biggest costs to every local government.

Part of the reason people have become so complacent about waste is because local governments deal with waste so effectively. You pop it in the bin, it is whisked away and you don't have to deal with it again. It has taken Craig Recassel's confronting images of enormous piles of clothing or a tram full of coffee cups to make people wake up to what our waste issue truly looks like.

The response has been fantastic. Local businesses have come on board with incentives to BYO cups and bags, and people are participating!

The key now is to make waste reduction a normal part of our daily routine. Reducing waste can't be like a fad diet, it needs to be a permanent lifestyle change.

There are businesses such as Naturally Esperance, BJ's and Ecolosophy (to name a few - I know there is more of you out there), who have always had a strong ethic of minimising packaging and plastic. These businesses have the principles of reducing waste/plastic imbedded into their business practice and this is the key to long term change. It's not just businesses; we all need to make permanent changes to our lives that reduce waste.

You may not realise the Shire of Esperance has been actively finding new ways to diverting waste from landfill for 15 years and now 19% of our total waste is diverted from landfill. One example is the recent purchase of a glass crusher which means glass is crushed on site and used for road base rather than being recycled in Adelaide at a cost to ratepayers. This saves \$40K in freight a year.

But we can't stop there, we know can do even better and the Shire is currently investigating more ways to reduce landfill with large scale composting is high on the list.

The Shire will continue to find ways to minimise landfill but the biggest change needs to happen in every household. Hold your own "War on Waste," and the first step is to reduce what goes into the bin.

Spare a thought for the Shire's dedicated team who HAND sort everything that goes into your blue bin, and please remember to rinse your recyclables.