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For immediate release

Increasing landfill levies is good for business and the environment.

According to Dandenong based recycler, Waste Converters, the increase in landfill levies, introduced on July 1st, have been a boon for business.

"The phones are ringing hot! Last year we diverted 50,000 tonnes of commercial and building waste from landfill. If July is anything to go by we could potentially recycle 60,000 tonnes in this financial year" said Waste Converters Managing Director Ward Petherbridge.

The Victorian Government has been progressively increasing landfill levies. In 2001, the industrial levy was \$4 tonne. On July 1st this year the industrial landfill levy went from \$30 per tonne to \$44 per tonne, and it is set to rise to \$58.50 by 2015. This levy increase has seen tipping fees increase at landfills around Melbourne. Prices now range from \$100 per tonne up to \$130 per tonne in Melbourne's South East.

"For too long valuable materials have been squandered because there was no incentive for business to avoid landfill. It was just so cheap to dump" said Petherbridge.

Petherbridge has been recycling at the Dandenong site for over 15 years.

"When we started, we really only attracted businesses who were committed to sustainable practice. With the steadily increasing landfill levies there is a commercial as well as ethical incentive for recycling. Using our recycling services is now much cheaper than landfill. It is a real boost for the industry" said Petherbridge.

At the Dandenong site, Waste Converters accepts timber, garden, construction and demolition waste. Recycled products developed include; timber products such as pallets, crates, boxes and pegs; aggregate; mulch; compost and topsoil.

"In the 2010/11 financial year our recycling activities provided a net carbon benefit of 14,500 tonnes " said Petherbridge.

Access Economics research prepared for the National Waste Policy found that every 10,000 tonnes of material recycled supports more than nine jobs compared with less than three jobs supported by the same amount of material going to landfill.

" Dandenong has one of the highest rates of unemployment in Metropolitan Melbourne" said Petherbridge. "We employ over 40 people at our facility and the majority of our staff live locally. Many employees were previously long term unemployed, have limited English language skills and are over the age of 50. I am hoping that the increasing interest in recycling will mean more clean green jobs for Dandenong".

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