**Waste 2017 Abstract Submission**

**How communication and**

**Obstacles and Solutions to improved Illegal Dumping Reporting**

*My presentation is relevant to the following topic area(s).*

🞎 Circular economy 🞎 Overseas experiences

🞎 Collection (inc MUD’s, transient population areas) 🞎 Problem/Hazardous waste (inc asbestos, clinical &

🞎 Container Deposit Schemes medical, ocean plastics, paint, tyres etc)

🞎 Economics (inc business cases, data gathering, 🞎 Product Stewardship

monitoring performance) 🞎 Regional issues

🞎 Education (inc community engagement) 🞎 Recycling (inc CRC’s, collection)

🞎 E-Waste 🞎 Regulations and levies

🞎 Grants (outcomes and processes) 🞎 Social enterprise

🞎 Infrastructure (inc major waste grants, EfW, organics) 🞎 State based issues (eg. Fit for the Future NSW)

🞎 Innovative projects (case studies preferred) 🞎 Technology

🞎 Landfill (inc operations, regulations) 🞎 Tenders and contracts

🞎 Litter and/or illegal dumping (inc litter initiatives) 🞎 Other 🞎 Organics (inc collection, processing)

**Presenter information**

**Presenter name:** Tash Morton

**Presenter position:** Illegal Dumping Project Officer

**Presenter organisation:** Byron Shire Council

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**Biography**

Tash Morton has 20 years experience in waste management and sustainability education programs. She is the director of Waste Matters Consultancy and delivers programs for a range of organisations including North East Waste, NSW EPA, Byron Shire Council and community organisations including Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALC’s). Tash has orchestrated regional illegal dumping projects for North East Waste since 2012, involving 7 Local Councils and communities in education, training, awareness raising campaigns and resource development. Tash has organised 2 Regional Forums on Illegal Dumping in the Northern Rivers, involving 13 government and non-government agencies. In 2015, she began to work more closely with LALC’s in the Northern Rivers to assist them with accessing funding for rubbish projects on Aboriginal lands. Tash holds a Bachelor of Environmental Science in Environmental Policy and Indigenous studies.

**Title**

Illegal Dumping- Let the Data Do the Talking

**Abstract Summary**

100

Illegal dumping is a frustrating issue for Local Governments. Its expensive to deal with, residents expect it to be cleaned up for their amenity and even though it’s “waste” it is primarily not dealt with by the waste sections of Councils. On top of this, it is under-reported by Councils and therefore the true costs of dealing with illegal dumping, is unknown. In July 2016, Byron Shire Council initiated an illegal dumping project to improve their reporting and recording of data. The question is, based on their improved data, can they justify to management that investing resources into surveillance and compliance to prevent illegal dumping is worthwhile?

**Abstract**

*400-600*

How can Local Governments dispense with a problem when they can’t apportion the cost? They can’t. Until recently, Byron Shire Council was grossly under-calculating and under-estimating the true cost of illegal dumping on their operations and resources. The question now is, based on their improved data, can they justify to management that investing resources into surveillance and compliance to prevent illegal dumping is worthwhile?

Illegal dumping is a frustrating issue for Local Governments. Its expensive to deal with, residents expect it to be cleaned up for their amenity and even though it’s “waste” it is primarily not dealt with by the waste sections of Councils. On top of this, it is under-reported by Councils and therefore the true costs of dealing with illegal dumping, is unknown.

In Byron Council, six sections of Council deal with illegal dumping, which also raises its own challenges when introducing new procedures, and negotiating budgets, workflows and responsibilities.

In July 2016, Byron Shire Council with NSW EPA Clean Up and Prevention funding engaged a contractor to consult across the Council and to develop the resources and procedures required to improve data collection and reporting in the field. As part of the program the Council has adopted RID online to gather the data and adapted the Council’s Customer Request Management System (CRM) to mimic the data required on RID online.

Four months into the program the Council has recorded 230 illegal dumping incidents. Past records indicated 64 incidents in 2015 and 42 incidents in 2014. New field reporting of illegal dumping identified 85 incidents in the first 4 months that previously would have gone unrecorded. This highlights, that if Councils rely on their CRM as the only means of gathering illegal dumping data it will significantly under-represent the problem. Four months into the program we have recorded an estimated 127 Tonnes of illegally dumped waste. Byron Shire Council’s 2015 records reported to the NSW EPA 24.5 Tonnes and 37 Tonnes is 2014.

Without better quality data on illegal dumping, Councils cannot justify the expense and resources required to undergo investigation, surveillance and pro-active compliance to prevent illegal dumping. After consulting with the different managers at Byron Shire Council in the early stages of the project it became apparent that the Council was unwilling to make changes that could not be justified as having a cost benefit to the Council. Hence, we were set on a mission to “Let the data do the talking” and ensure that we captured the data more effectively and efficiently.

In addition, the collection of better quality data has enabled us to understand where the hot spots for dumping really are compared to the anecdotal reports Council had based their assumptions on. Also having better data on the types of wastes dumped, will allow the Council to focus future education campaigns.

This presentation will identify the strategies we used at Byron Shire Council to capture illegal dumping data more effectively and improve the quality of data we record. We will share the challenges and the lessons learnt along the way and divulge the cost-benefit analysis of whether investing in prevention of illegal dumping can be justified.