**2019 NATSIEH Conference Abstract**

**Vehicle & Scrap Metal Recycling Project**

**Michael Davis**

**Manager Central Australia Waste Management Working Group**

[**Michael.davis@macdonnell.nt.gov.au**](mailto:Michael.davis@macdonnell.nt.gov.au)

**08-89589604 & 0439723071**

**Biography**

I have held the position of Regional Waste Manager for the “Central Australian Remote Waste Management Program” since November 2015.

The role involves working with Councils, Regulatory Bodies and Communities to promote the Health and Environmental benefits of appropriate waste management practices. This is achieved through the implementation of new or improved Policy and Procedures and the conclusion of waste related projects and Education Programs.

My previous Local Government experience includes roles such as Project Officer for Community Services and Works and Infrastructure Departments and as an Operations Manager responsible for two Land fill’s, eight transfer stations and a Saleyards facility for Narrabri Shire Council in NSW.

**Abstract Summary**

Barkly, Central Desert and MacDonnell Regional Councils are creating a subsidiary involving the Central Australian Waste Management Working Group (CAWMWG) to establish a metal recycling, recovery and sorting operation.

The operation has the ability to travel remotely to remove all vehicles and scrap metal stockpiles from Council and Crown lands, baling them into 1.1 tonne blocks and transporting them to identified storage locations, including Alice Springs, Imanpa, Hermannsburg, Ti Tree and Tennant Creek. From there the commodity with be transported and sold to Markets in Adelaide or Darwin and the income to fund ongoing operations.

**Abstract**

The CAWMWG commenced in 2012 and is an undertaking by Central Desert, Barkly and MacDonnell Regional Councils, NT Department of Health, NTEPA, DHCD and LGANT. The aim of the group is to work collaboratively, discuss regional waste management and environmental health issues, along with developing sustainable and best practice waste management for remote communities in the Central Australian region.

Underpinned by the Central Australian Remote Waste Management Manager (CARWMM), the group has achieved real outcomes in best practice waste management, improved health outcomes for residents living on remote communities and achieved both Northern Territory and National recognition for their efforts to date.

Through the delivery of best practice waste management activities now being delivered across the three Regional Councils, the group has identified the ever increasing stockpiles of scrap metals and derelict vehicles as a major issue in their regional and remote communities, and the Northern Territory as a whole.

At present there is an estimated 31,000 tonnes of scrap metal on Council and Crown lands in Central Australia. The vast majority of this volume is legacy metals that include abandoned vehicles, building materials, whitegoods and general scrap. This metal scrap is increasing at a rate of 3,000 tonnes per year.

Abandoned vehicles are an environmental hazard along with being an eyesore on our remote landscape. They have traditionally been hard to remove given the high costs/low returns for scrap dealers. The current service provider, who is located interstate, only provides intermittent collection on sealed roads and the Stuart Highway. While this provider has recently upgraded their equipment, they are unwilling to travel on unsealed roads, which mean most Central Australian remote communities cannot access the service.

This proposal is a regional collaboration between three Regional Councils (Central Desert, Barkly and MacDonnell) that will involve the establishment of metal recycling, recovery and sorting operations across the three regions.

Initially limited to the Central Australian regions of the Central Desert, Barkly and MacDonnell Regional Councils, the operation has the ability to travel remotely to remove all vehicles and scrap metal stockpiles from Council and Crown lands, baling them into 1.1 tonne blocks and transporting them to identified storage locations, including Alice Springs which is supported by Alice Springs Town Council (ASTC).

There is also potential to service Town Camps in major centres. The scrap metal bales will be trucked to market independently at no cost to the program and once received by the market, the group will be paid at current market rates.

It will take 3 years to complete this initial operation and then once every 3 years to service the region. Once completed, the operation will actively target other regions in the Northern Territory and neighbouring States, offering the service on a commercial basis.

The proposed undertaking by the group will not only “*clean up country*”, making communities more liveable and attractive, it will provide training opportunities, in turn upskilling local labour and creating local employment opportunities. It is estimated the project will create 4 x full time equivalent positions working in the program.

Surplus revenues raised through operations will be reinvested back into the project ensuring it is sustainable and further fund ongoing best practise waste management projects across the Council regions.

The CAWMG see the true benefits of this project as improving the health and living conditions in remote communities for their constituents, and cleaning up country across the Northern Territory.

Seed funding from the Northern Territory Government is being held by LGANT whilst the three remote councils form a subsidiary to govern the operations of this project.