



MEDIA RELEASE

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Waste and resource recovery - an essential industry, driving Australian jobs and the economy

The waste and resource recovery industry makes at least a \$14.2bn contribution to the Australian economy, and is integral to the lives of all Australians, underpinning economic growth and employment. Effective waste management and resource recovery is linked to our quality of life, and plays a significant role in environmental and public health, planning and infrastructure, resource and energy production, and emergency management.

In this election period, WMAA calls on the major parties to commit to the development of the waste and resource recovery industry, to ensure continued growth and contribution to the economy, the high standard of life we enjoy, and as a driver of jobs in the future as we transition away from an economy centered on the mining industry.

WMAA considers the following issues as fundamental for the continued growth of the waste and resource recovery industry in this country.

Recognition of the value of the industry

The waste and resource recovery industry is as an essential service in the life of all Australians.

The waste and resource recovery industry is an important driver of economic activity.

- WMAA calls on the Federal Government to convene an annual industry and government waste summit, with representation from Federal, state, and local government
- WMAA recommends waste and resource recovery is included as a standing agenda item at the *Meeting of Environmental Ministers* forum

Improved cross portfolio coordination

Waste is an issue which crosses several Government portfolios, including environment, industry, resources, and planning. There is a need to ensure effective linkages operate between portfolios/agencies, removing barriers and supporting efficiencies in business-government relationships.

WMAA is the peak body for the waste and resource recovery industry

- WMAA believes that while waste and resource recovery resides within the environment portfolio, strong interdepartmental ties need to be created with the industry, cities and infrastructure, resources, and treasury portfolios

Consistency in regulatory frameworks and market instruments

The waste and resource recovery industry is characterised by a substantial volume of regulations and related instruments operating at several levels of government. WMAA calls for:

- a greater harmonisation of industry policies, regulation and enforcement across Australia to improve business efficiency and consistency across all states
- regulatory frameworks to have a built in flexibility to keep pace with continual adjustments in market conditions
- the establishment of a comprehensive and nationally integrated system for the identification, classification, treatment, disposal and monitoring of waste
- fair competition and a level playing field between private and public sector businesses; Councils must not force business owners to use their waste and recycling services by the introduction of by-laws or mandatory service fees. It is against the principles of National Competition Policy.

National leadership is required

The Federal Government can demonstrate leadership through:

- greater utilisation of and increased green procurement policies by Federal Government (e.g. use of secondary raw materials and support for those markets)
- waste and resource recovery infrastructure - planning and coordination with state and local government jurisdictions
- a comprehensive national data set (incl. national and common state targets, and national reporting for waste and resource recovery performance)
- driving local industry/employment development in, for example, e-Waste and Energy from Waste (EfW); on the latter, we could use the \$1 billion Clean Energy Innovation Fund (announced by Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull) to support EfW, currently this relates to 'emerging technologies to make the leap from demonstration to commercial deployment' - the role for EfW funding under this is unclear.
- introduce appropriate market instruments to increase recovery rates
- supporting a national approach to Container Deposit Schemes and waste education

National carbon policy

Industry experience with the carbon pricing system found it to be complex and difficult.

- WMAA seeks an exclusion of the solid waste industry from any carbon pricing system; WMAA believes emissions can be controlled more effectively through other mechanisms.