

8 December, 2018

The Hon. Melissa Price MP, Federal Minister for the Environment
The Hon. David Speers MP, South Australia Minister for the Environment and Water
The Hon. Gabrielle Upton MP, NSW Minister for Environment, Minister for Local Government
The Hon. Leanne Enoch MP, Queensland Minister for the Environment and Great Barrier Reef
The Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio MP, Victorian Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change
The Hon. Stephen Dawson MLC, Western Australian Minister for Environment
The Hon. Elise Archer, Tasmania Minister for Environment
The Hon. Mick Gentleman, Australian Capital Territory Minister for Environment and Heritage
The Hon. Lauren Moss, Northern Territory Minister for Environment and Natural Resources

National Waste Policy
MEETING OF ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS – 7th DECEMBER

Dear Ministers,

The National Waste Recycling Industry Council (NWRIC) welcomes the timely reinvigoration of the National Waste Policy. National leadership by all governments on this issue is long overdue.

The NWRIC represents Australia's largest waste and recycling companies, with the majority of the private sector assets invested in waste management and recycling in Australia.

Australia must not overlook the significance of the waste and recycling related challenges it currently faces. We are still one of the highest generators of waste per capita in the developed world. This underscores the structural flaws inherent in current policies and regulations across all jurisdictions.

Inconsistent state waste regulations, limited infrastructure planning, reliance on overseas markets for recyclates, unfair local markets, increasing contamination, and a lack of regulated product stewardship schemes are all major barriers to Australia maximising the true value of its waste as a resource.

Unless there is a significant shift in how our federal, state and territory governments effectively cooperate to remove these barriers, Australia's waste will continue to grow, and industry will not invest in technologies capable of transforming waste into valuable resources for local and global markets.

The right policy settings will unlock new revenues, create jobs and build competitiveness. However, governments must support, not hinder the waste and recycling industry

We understand the new National Waste Policy will be discussed as part of the Meeting of Environment Ministers (MEM) on 7th December. The NWRIC strongly recommends that you not only endorse and fund the national waste policy, but that the most efficient way to reduce waste, create jobs, protect communities is to give priority to;

1. **Harmonising state waste regulations** specifically around landfill levies, waste definitions, licensing and policing to stop fraudulent behaviours, illegal dumping and unnecessary stockpiling.

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2. **Creating a national waste and recycling infrastructure plan** that maps material and resource pathways for the next 30 years to provide private industry the confidence to invest in essential technology and facilities to recover more resources.
3. **Regulating battery and tyre product stewardship schemes.** Two of the most challenging problem waste streams are used lithium ion batteries and tyres. Lithium ion batteries cause fires when pierced, both in facilities and trucks. The hazards created by stockpiles of used tyres are well documented. The NWRIC believes both these products should be regulated under the *Product Stewardship Act 2011* to ensure full producer engagement, rather than relying on partial industry engagement through voluntary approaches. It is only when these schemes are regulated you will see real change as demonstrated by the National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme, the mandatory Oil Stewardship Scheme and more recently the NSW Container Deposit Scheme.
4. **Mandating local, state and federal government procurement of recycled content in products and services.** The NWRIC recommends that governments should focus on those commodities lacking an end market, including glass, mixed plastics and paper. Organics is also an important target for government procurement at the local council level.
5. **Establishing a National Waste and Recycling Commissioner** to oversight the implementation of the policy. Collaboration across all governments and industry is key to the successful implementation of the National Waste Policy. Therefore, it is vital there is a single point of leadership to facilitate this collaboration that will enable regulatory reform, encourage investment and report on the progress of the policy via the National Waste Report.

All members of the NWRIC are committed to the highest standards in waste management and recycling and are ready to commit resources and work with Commonwealth, State, local government and the business sectors in its implementation of the new National Waste Policy.

We welcome further correspondence on these important matters.

Yours sincerely,

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