



MEDIA RELEASE

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Wasted Opportunities For Recovering Resources

This year, the National Waste and Recycling Industry Council (NWRIC) is calling for governments and businesses to transform the way we look at waste in Australia, shifting focus on how it can be recovered into new and valuable resources for reuse.

Every single Australian now generates around 2.88 tonnes of waste annually, according to a national report released by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water last month.

NWRIC CEO Rick Ralph is calling for a dramatic shift in the way we think about recycling policy if we want to achieve a true circular economy that supports Australian supply chains for critical manufacturing activities.

“Over the last 6 years, the nation’s waste generation has increased by 5.6 million tonnes. Considering the billions of dollars State Governments rake in each year from taxes, masked as incentives to reduce waste, it’s clear we are going backwards,” Mr Ralph said.

“Our policy makers are too focused on analysing waste generation in terms of how much is generated and thrown away and how much might be recycled, instead of prioritising resource recovery. We only see about 10 per cent of waste levy taxes going back into the resource recovery industry.”

“As a nation we need to adjust our thinking and look at the renewable and valuable resources we are generating in waste as being the real alternatives for Australian manufacturing, energy and other supply chains. By doing so we will reduce our reliance on virgin resources, reduce our carbon footprint and genuinely contribute to lessening our human impact on the planet

The Federal Government’s Recycling Modernisation Fund is aimed at getting more waste materials reused locally in industries but it must be broadened to include multiple material types not simply traditional kerbside collections.

“It’s a welcome trend to see more and more Australian businesses developing innovative ways they can use resources our industry recovers. From road surfaces using glass or used tyres, organics into agriculture, or biogas into renewable energy powering Australian homes and business, but more must be achieved” Mr Ralph said.

“Where we see the gap is at the Government policy-making level and without a fundamental rethink in defining what we traditionally consider ‘waste’ as being and a greater acceptance of

the resource opportunity, Australia's environmental footprint and its impacts will continue to grow."

NWRIC is championing meaningful change by shifting the narrative away from waste management to resource recovery, empowering Australians to recognise the potential in our discarded materials and work together toward building a sustainable, circular economy that builds important new supply chains for critical domestic manufacturing.

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About The National Waste and Recycling Industry Council

The National Waste and Recycling Industry Council is the leading business advocate for Australia's waste management and resource recovery sector. Our members provide Australians with a valuable source of renewable resources by collecting, managing and treating waste and recyclable materials, and making resources available to Government, communities and manufacturers for re-use in place of natural materials.