

Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

23 September 2019

Via email: regionaljobs.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Richard and the Senate Committee,

The National Waste Recycling Industry Council (NWRIC) is the national peak body representing waste and recycling businesses. We work to improve waste and recycling services for all Australians.

Our national members¹ and state affiliates², service most households and businesses across every State and Territory. The NWRIC's 450 plus members range from small family-owned businesses to multi-billion-dollar global companies. They collectively own and operate nearly every private waste and recycling facility in Australia for collecting, recycling, processing and treating waste.

The NWRIC members work together and cooperatively share a vision for a fair, safe, innovative and sustainable waste and recycling industry. The NWRIC members do this by:

- transforming waste into resources for reuse or energy;
- ensuring the safe handling, disposal and treatment of non-recyclable and hazardous waste; and
- providing a safe and clean environment for the community.

The NWRIC welcomes the opportunity to submit evidence to the *Select Committee into Jobs for the Future in Regional Areas*.

A. New industries and employment opportunities that can be created in the regions;

A necessary ingredient in the establishment of a circular economy is what industry term 'green zones'. Green zones are dedicated and tenure locations for establishing resource recovery, energy recovery, hazardous waste treatment, and landfill facilities.

These green zones should be established within 200km of urban centres, making them an ideal opportunity to create regional jobs.

Leading examples of existing green zones include the [Woodlawn Eco Park](#) run by Veolia in NSW and Australian Paper's proposed recycling and manufacturing hub at Morwell in Victoria. In the case of the

¹ Australia's nine largest waste & recycling companies: Alex Fraser Group (Hanson), Cleanaway, J. J. Richards and Sons, Solo Resource Recovery, Sims Metal Management, Suez, Remondis, ResourceCo and Veolia.

² Waste Recycling Industry Association, Queensland (WRIQ), Waste Contractors and Recyclers Association of NSW (WCRA), The Victorian Waste Management Association (VWMA), Waste Recycling Industry Association of South Australia, Waste Recycling Industry Association of Western Australia (WRIWA) and the Waste Recycling Industry Northern Territory, WRINT.

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collaboration between Australian Paper and SUEZ, the facility will create jobs to replace those by the closure of the Hazelwood coal fired power station.

B. The number of existing jobs in regional areas in clean energy technology and ecological services and their future significance;

The Australian waste recycling industry currently employs close to 50,000 people (FTE). The estimated direct FTE employment per 10,000 tonnes of waste is 9.2 for recycling and 2.8 for landfill. Australia currently has in excess of 20 million tonnes of material per year which potentially be diverted from landfill and recovered. The priority material here would be diverting organics and food waste from landfill.

B. Lessons learned from structural adjustments in the automotive, manufacturing and forestry industries and energy privatisation and their impact on labour markets and local economies;

Fair markets are essential to advancing waste and recycling services. Where waste assets are owned or controlled by government entities, private sector investors will not enter the market to compete against government. That, monopolistic local government ownership of waste assets, including waste collection fleets and material treatment facilities can inhibit private investment into the sector. This investment is essential to build a circular economy.

C. The importance of long-term planning to support the diversification of supply chain industries and local economies;

Tenure sites for waste treatment and recycling, appropriately located near capital cities and urban centre, are essential to advancing the circular economy. These sites need appropriate road access, access to the power grid, and can reduce transport emissions if a heavy rail link is available. Landfill sites require appropriate geology (the most important aspect of landfill development is sitting). Recycling, and appropriate treatment of not recyclable materials³ cannot advance without these secure sites.

- a. **measures to guide the transition into new industries and employment, including:**
 - i. **community infrastructure to attract investment and job creation;**
 - ii. **the need for a public authority to manage the transition;**
 - iii. **meaningful community consultation to guide the transition; and**
 - iv. **the role of vocational education providers, including TAFE, in enabling reskilling and retraining;**

No comments.

³ Including asbestos, and non-combustible hazardous material such as heavy metals and fire fighting foams.

b. the use of renewable resources in Northern Australia to build a clean energy export industry to export into Asia; and

The Australian recycling industry has the capacity to create process engineered fuels which can replace fossil fuels to reduce pollution. Our key export market is Asian countries.

c. any related matters.

The Australian waste and recycling industry would benefit from:

- Harmonisation of the regulations and standards across Australia's six States and two Territories which govern waste and recycling.
- Additional action to evenly police standards and regulations, and new resources to prevent illegal dumping for commercial gain. In this regard, the NWRIC recommends universal licencing of waste processing facilities, irrespective of size, and a register of all waste transporters.
- Australia needs a national approach to landfill levies, which should include a measure such 'levy portability'⁴ to prevent the unnecessary interstate movement of waste materials.
- Australia would benefit from a nationally consistent container deposit scheme, and further extension of the *Product Stewardship Act 2011* to cover priority products in particular batteries, all electronics and electrical equipment and photovoltaic systems.

For further information please contact NWRIC Secretary Alex Serpo (secretariat@nwrlic.com.au or 0417 932 303) in the first instance.

Yours sincerely,



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⁴ Levy portability means that levies are changed based on where waste is generated, rather than disposed. This must occur even across State borders, via a reciprocal agreement between States and Territories.

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