

National Recycled Material Specifications for Sorting and Processing Facilities

Summary

The National Waste and Recycling Industry Council (NWRIC), with assistance of MRA Consulting, has been funded by the DAWE to develop national recycled material specifications for material recycling facilities (including sorting, primary and secondary processors). Specifications for plastics, paper, glass, metals, and organics coming through the Municipal Solid Waste collection stream will be developed in consultation with end users (e.g., manufacturers, construction, farmers) and the recycling sector (sorters and processors).

This is one of three projects being led by the Department to drive greater resource recovery and increase the use of recovered materials. The other two projects being the development of a national accreditation or certification scheme for Australian recyclers led by ACOR and the harmonisation of state kerbside recycling collections being led by DAWE in collaboration with state and territory governments.



NWRIC will work closely with ACOR to ensure alignment of the two projects and to prevent any duplication of effort and stakeholder engagement.

This work will contribute to implementing the National Waste Policy Action Plan targets to reduce waste generation by 10%, increase resource recovery to 80% and significantly increase the use of recycled content by governments and industry.

The specifications will assist Australian recyclers meet market demands for recovered materials locally and overseas and improve the quality of recovered materials as tradeable commodities. It will also help stimulate domestic re-use of recovered materials by improving market information and instilling greater confidence in the quality of recovered materials.

Project steps and timeline

1. Identify all current international and national performance standards / specifications for plastics, paper, metals, glass, and organics. (July)
2. Consult with stakeholders (i.e., end users, processors, and sorters) on current performance standards about relevance, gaps, and proposed amendments to meet sorter, processor and end user needs. (August).
3. Assess impacts of standards on resource recovery; transition to the circular economy; benefits, barriers and risks; financial and market impacts on - upstream processes (e.g. kerbside waste collections), downstream processes (e.g. sorting, secondary processing and re-manufacturing), price of recycled materials and products, relative to cost of virgin materials; consumer demand

for certain products, ability of businesses to compete in the market or incentives to compete, waste and recycling contracts and compliance costs. (August/September)

4. Recommend timeframe and practical steps to implement standards, including responsibilities, how to avoid unnecessary impacts (such as disruption to waste and recycling contracts) and establishing an enduring system to maintain and update specifications in the future (September/October)

Key dates

- Stakeholder List and Technical Advisory Panel established – July
- List of specifications – July
- Stakeholder Consultation – August & Sept
- First draft of final specifications – August
- Draft report – September
- Final report – October

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ABOUT NWRIC

The National Waste and Recycling Industry Council (NWRIC) is funded by major national waste and recycling businesses operating Australia wide. Its core purpose is to represent its members and affiliates priorities to the government to advance waste and recycling in Australia.